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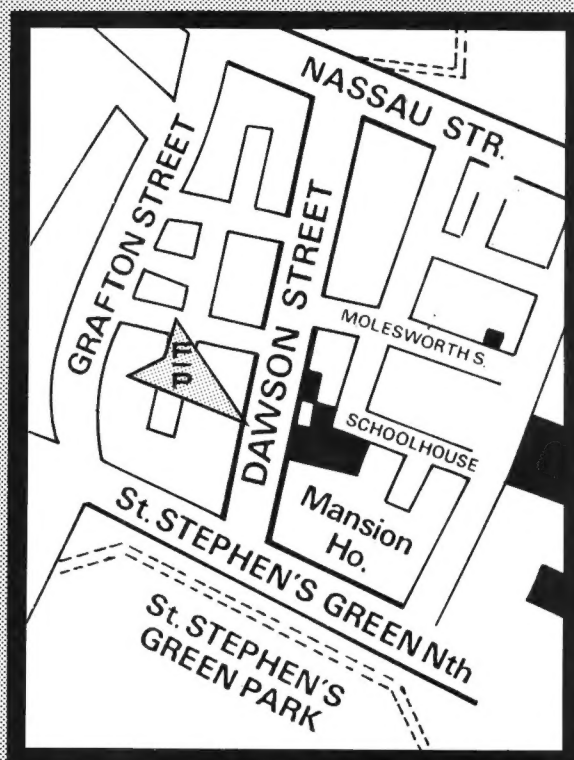


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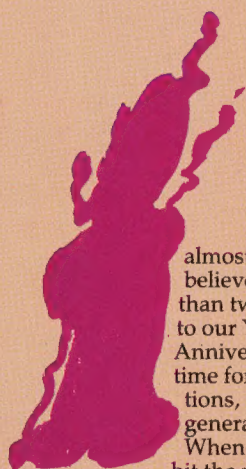
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Advertisement Manager Neil Dyson Sales Executive Sarah Chapman ☎ (0584) 4603 OR (0584) 5852 MAIL ORDER Carol Kinsey SUBSCRIPTIONS Denise Roberts PO Box 20, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB ☐ Typesetting Tortoise Shell Press, Ludlow. Colour origination Scan Studios, Islington, London. Printed in England by Carlisle Web Offset, Newtown Trading Estate, Carlisle, Cumbria CA2 7NR – a member of the BPCC Group. Distribution COMAG, Tavistock Road, West Drayton, Middlesex.

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CHILD CARE ORDERS



"I had the Devil's own job working out what would be the most effective coverage"

almost can't believe it. It's less than two months to our Year One Anniversary, a time for celebrations, parties and general euphoria. When **FEAR** first

hit the newsstands we had a few reservations about our controversial magazine. How far could we go in our coverage, particularly in horror? Would we get the mix of gore and subtlety, fantasy and science fiction right? Would we have enough material to include in the magazine for six months let alone a year?

I can tell you now that few newagents have taken offence at our photographs, artwork or coverage. The most worrying time was, of course, our *Hellraiser II* and *Phantasm II* coverage but, despite a few 'oohs' and 'aahs' from some of you we didn't have one real complaint. Which is surprising when you consider that **FEAR**, along with *Starburst* and *Viz*, was submitted to CARE, an organisation which upholds morality and has been known to bring lawsuits against purveyors of anything which is suitably depraved – particularly if children are involved somewhere in the chain.

You'll be pleased to hear that we not only beat the rap but out of the three potential offenders we came out top for content and approach. No doubt some of you will be disappointed that we were let off so lightly: after all, amongst other things, we are a horror magazine and you may feel we haven't got our balance tipped far enough towards the gore pointer. But I've only heard the vaguest of criticisms



from some readers of our competitors and on the whole all I can say on behalf of the majority of our readers, *Hard Care Bears* – and that's a vote by omission if ever there was one.

THE DEVIL'S OWN

So, our fears – which, admittedly, all publishers have when launching a magazine – weren't justified, but on one count I feel that I've got to make an apology. Far from having too little material for six issues a year we've found that there is too much. I've had the Devil's own job working out what would be the most effective coverage in each issue and, according to the eagerness with which you write to us we seem to have got it about right.

The problem has further been complicated by our launch on the US market – and, by the way, welcome to all our American readers – so we've decided that as of next issue we're going to go international. Where possible we'll offer parallel information on books, showing British and American publishing details, we'll give details of availability and ratings of videos and tell you, where possible, if legal outlets for US or British imports exist.

Don't, however, worry that we'll shrink the number of products we cover. The extra coverage, while being of great benefit, will take up very little space and also provide a

service which isn't readily available in other genre magazines. We also hope to be able to offer certain imports through the magazine with British price tags so you don't have to resort to international reply coupons, dollar conversions, and long waits.

I'll save other proposed changes in **FEAR** until next issue's *Dark Playground*, but suffice to say that we've already tied up early exclusive coverage of four of this year's biggest fantasy/horror and SF films (UK and US production) and we've captured many more big-name authors to talk to and write for us. We would, of course, like to hear from you if you've got qualms about any of the proposed changes, and will react quickly if there's anything you don't like.

One final apology to all writers who have sent me short stories for hopeful publishing in **FEAR**: I know many of you haven't heard anything back. It's been a shortcoming of administration. All I can offer in defence is that it takes an awful long time to read through the thousand-plus stories I've received, let alone edit **FEAR** itself! We are now trying to do something about it – slowly – so please bear with my rude silence!

FAIR SHARES

And now, a plea to our readers and some of the UK's book publishers. In our World Fantasy Convention issue I mentioned the lack of



coverage for our female fantasy and SF writers. There are many fabulous women novelists in the genres and yet so many of their books are pushed out onto the shelves with little PR preparation.

You may know the names of **Tanith Lee** and **Anne McCaffrey** – both of whom will be featured in the next two issues of **FEAR**. Perhaps **Sheri Tepper** might have caught your attention. But, be honest. Do you consume the works of **Jody Scott**, **Diana Paxon**, **Anne Rice**, **Lisa Tuttle** and **Nancy Springer** in the same way as those of **Clive Barker**, **Stephen King**, or **Isaac Asimov**? I bet you'd find it difficult to name two female fantasy writers who managed during last year to get into the **W.H. Smith** top ten.

So, why the blind spot which, admittedly, is getting less pronounced, but, if publishers' lists for this year are to be believed, won't be lifted for some time? I think it's that good old bugbear of PR coverage. We have a never-ending circle of nefarious effect which goes back to the advent of author publicity. The big names are, rightly, given big PR budgets but those names tend to have 'mister' in front of them. Ergo, despite the greater number of women than men on this planet, the male writers get a better deal.

Isn't that always the case, you might argue, yawn, turn the page or drop a comment about positive discrimination and kick it around

for a while. For a variety of reasons, I am against positive discrimination. Rather than promoting an image of equal opportunities, it makes women's work stick out for the wrong reasons causing resentment in both men and women.

But what else can magazines like **FEAR** do if they don't adopt positive discrimination. The answer's not simple but I think our approach, though somewhat subtle, is already working. You didn't know that we *had* an approach or that we'd even started to consider the matter? Well, what about our interviews with **Sheri Tepper** and **Janny Wurts**. We've also got articles on **Tanith Lee**, **Rachel Pollack** and **Anne McCaffrey** ready for publication. We also have interviews planned with several of the top women executives, producers and directors in the film world and, to start the ball rolling next issue, a round-up article of some of the best-known women writers in fantasy/horror/SF.

You may think 'so what', but take a look at other publications and you'll find a lack of balance. You may find the occasional bimbo sex horror/sex interview but who's bothered to interview **Mary Lambert** about her movie adaptation of **Stephen King's** *Pet Sematary* and who's talked to American actress **Bobbie Bresee** about her movie production company rather than her salacious

roles in low-budget horror flicks? What about the artistically talented **Ashley Lawrence** in *Hellraiser II*? Yes, sex sells but intellect . . . ? Given the current climate, if you were to interview a female horror star would you go for her tits or her talent?

I'm not saying that **FEAR** is blameless, but after talking to a great many women writers, filmmakers and actresses I can say that we're now open to the problem and, in the year ahead, will hopefully make our peace with the issue. Perhaps the publishers, filmmakers and fans may do the same.

APARTHEID ANGER

Another politically sensitive subject. Hey, are you sure we ought to do this? I look around the office for disapproval, find none and turn back to my word processor. And what, you may ask, is the subject of my displeasure now?

SOUTH AFRICA

I think it's large enough on the page for most people to notice but, after a brief Christmas conversation with a friend and a quick look at a recent *Media Show* report on the subject, I'm very disturbed that some movie moguls seem to ignore the matter. For not altogether altruistic reasons they scoff at the idea of an already implemented creative embargo on South Africa and, mentioning no names, continue to make films in that country.

The main reason for shooting in South Africa appears to be the need to cut costs on location and studio work. Crews work cheaply, the government is obviously pleased with the business, and even the weather is unlikely to halt shooting. You also have the facility of anonymity. Did you know that at least three fantasy/horror films were made in South Africa last year? One of those was supposed to be set in New York, so the makers can hardly say that they needed the beautiful African locations – and if they did, why not go to one of the neighbouring states!

I do think it's the job of **FEAR** to report what's happening out there, and I have a feeling that filmmakers who use South Africa as a base do so because of money and the hidden nature of their operation. When readers, like you, get to know about this business – in what is still a particularly rosey time for the British film industry – the bosses at companies such as Cannon may take some note.

"Did you know that at least three fantasy/horror films were made in South Africa last year?"

John Gailford

THE NIGHTBREED HATCHES

TWO YEARS after his dazzlingly impressive cinematic debut, **Clive Barker** finally returns to the director's chair with *Nightbreed*.

Based on his most recent novel, *Cabal*, the £10 million production begins shooting at Pinewood Studios in March, with location work set for Canada.

Although **Christopher Lambert** and **Rutger Hauer** were initially linked with the part of Boone, the role has gone to American **Craig Schaffer**, who starred opposite **Emilio Estevez** in *That Was Then, This Is Now*.

And, in a quite remarkable piece of casting, **David Cronen-**

berg has been signed on as Decker, the mad psychoanalyst.

Others in the fairly eclectic cast are **Charlie Haid**, from *Hill Street Blues*; pop stars **Marc Almond** and **Suzi Quatro** as monster and Sheryl respectively; and **Malcolm Smith** as Ashbery the priest.

At press time the role of Lorie had not been confirmed.

Image Animation, under the supervision of **Geoff Portass**, once again provides the make-up effects – this time supplying the production with 50-100 monsters.

Mark Salisbury

STEPHEN KING: RUMOURS OF HIS DEATH WERE GREATLY EXAGGERATED

STEPHEN KING is back in circulation. After a break of more than a year, in which he has published no new fiction, the world's most famous author has a new book ready for publication. It's called *The Darker Half* and, we are told, it's a blockbuster about the publishing indus-

try with all the horror of King's most gruelling book to date.

No firm publication date has yet been set for the US or Britain, but it's good to see that earlier fears over King's 'retirement' by some American magazines were ill-founded.

FUN IN THE SUN

CALLING all British SF fans. The National Science Fiction Convention (Eastercon) is to be held over the weekend 24-27 March 1989, on the sunny – we hope – island of Jersey in the Hotel de France, St Helier.

The professional Guests of Honour include **Anne McCaffrey**, who is world famous for her Dragonriders of Pern books and **M John Harrison**, many of whose stories are set in his ancient city of Viriconium. Artist Guest of Honour is **Don Lawrence**, perhaps best known for *The Trigan Empire*.

Fan Guests of Honour include **Avedon Carol** and **Rob Hansen** who coedit the magazines *Chuch* and *Pulp*.

The programme is very varied, with pride of place going to written SF, although other activities are being planned. And it's good to see that new fans are being encouraged to

attend. Some of last year's large conventions catered well for those people who knew each other, but did little to seek the participation of beginners.

Discussion panels and workshops are at the forefront of the Con, built as far as possible around the main Guests of Honour. They include *Aliens Among Us*, which considers alien life in all forms; *The Art of the Impossible*, a show of comics and book illustration; *Feminism, Heaven and Earth*, which covers out-of-this world ideas; *Music of the Spheres*; and *The Write Stuff* which covers written SF in its many forms.

Fantasy fans will also find items of interest in the program, and might even bump into **Ramsey Campbell**, **Stephen Gallagher** or **Ian Watson** while doing a tour of the island.

Membership rates are now fixed, but we would advise you

to book as early as possible to give the organisers a chance to set up your hotel accommodation. Attending Membership costs £21, Juvenile £9, Supporting Child £1, and Associate £9.

For more information about travel and accommodation write to Contrivance, 63 Drake Road, Chessington, Surrey.

HODDER AND HEADLINE FEEL THE FEAR

TWO MAJOR UK fiction publishers plan a blockbusting season of fantasy, horror and science fiction.

The Hodder and Stoughton hardcover schedule includes two **Piers Anthony** books, *Heaven Cent* and *Out of Phaze*, the former dealing with the magical land of Xanth while the latter takes a look at the parallel worlds of Phaze and Proton.

On the horror front, **Daniel Rhodes's** *Adversary*, a tale blending old black magic with a modern setting, is out in April.

Hodder's nonfiction hardback list holds the promise of *Bare Bones* by **Tim Underwood** and **Chuck Miller**. Subtitled *Conversations on Terror with Stephen King*, it brings together interviews with the great man about his work and life.

Headline hardbacks release **Dean R Koontz's** latest novel, *Midnight*, in April, together with the paperback of *Lightning*. The company is putting a lot of power behind this best-selling author and several of his books, previously issued under a pseudonym in the US, will be launched during the year – see next issue for exclusive news.

FREDDY FOR COMPUTERS

FREDDY'S ready – Nightmare on Elm Street 4: The Dream Master may have been bumped back to a May release date, but you'll soon be able to take an active part in the saga when Freddy appears in his own computer game.

As if plastic finger knives, tea mugs, holographic watches and

Freddy masks were not enough, the American Key Punch Corporation has taken the software rights from film distributor New Line. British-based software giant US Gold will handle UK sales of what will surely be a blockbuster.

US Gold also has the rights to the next Indiana Jones' spectacular, *The Last Crusade*, and the **Michael Jackson** movie, *Moonwalker*.

Meanwhile, rival firm Grand-slam Entertainments has both Schwarzenegger movie *The Running Man* and puppet classic *Thunderbirds* lined up for computer life. Sounds like a hot time if you're into small-screen watchin'.

THE UK VIDEO-STORE MASSACRE

DESPITE a recent purge by some of the top video distributors, there's healthy horror fare in the rental racks.

Vestron reanimates **Klaus Kinski** in his role as the vampire Nosferatu in *Vampire in Venice*. It's festival time in Venice and fearless vampire hunter Paris Catalano (**Christopher Plummer**) is invited to stay at the palace owned by a beautiful noblewoman called Helieta.

Legend has it that the palace was visited by Nosferatu during the time of the plague and contaminated her family. She's scared that the vampire may return and Plummer does his best to protect her.

The latest Virgin thriller release is *Fear* (?). An unhappy family is on holiday in a camper when they're hijacked by escaped convicts. Father and son, both experienced hunters, do their best to protect mother and daughter from rape and death.

Warner Home Video stoops to conquer with its release of *Beetlejuice* in April. The movie, directed by **Tim Burton**, stars the brilliant **Michael Keaton** as an ectoplasmic bioexorcist – you work it out.

Burton is profiled on page 14 of this issue.

Beetlejuice is joined on the shelves by *Return to Salem's Lot*, a film which has nothing to do with the **Stephen King** novel or the movie it became. It never made theatrical release in the US but is likely to do cracking business on VHS and BETA.

Contagion, Sony's follow-up to *Invasion of the Body Suckers*, stars **John Doyle**—who happens upon a lonely homestead run by a wealthy recluse and two young blondes. His interest in the women quickly becomes an obsession with sex and wealth, as he's manipulated into killing first his boss and then a series of others.

Finally, **Blood Harvest**, a bubonic bloodbath which romps into *Friday the 13th* territory. A young girl comes home

to discover her parents are missing.

Local feeling toward the family is running high . . . Dad was, after all, the bank man who's been foreclosing on farming properties around the area. But all is not as it seems. *Blood Harvest* is a movie for all true gore-mets—the splatter is nonstop, and Tiny Tim puts in some overtime as a menacing (or mischievous) clown who could just be a sicko.

AUTHORS GET IT TAPED

SCIENCE-FICTION and fantasy authors including **Isaac Asimov** and **Brian Aldiss** are raising money for the Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) in a unique talking-book venture called *The Drabble Project*.

A drabble, for those of you not nounced enough to know, is a short story of exactly 100 words—excluding the title. *The Drabble Project* is a collection of 100 drabbles by 75 writers, whose ages range from 12 to 70. All profits from the book, published by Becon Publications, will go to the RNIB Talking Book Library, which has more than 68,000 members aged from four to 100.

Books are recorded by professional readers onto special large cassettes, and there are more than 6,500 titles from which readers can choose, ranging from romance to history. The cassettes are played on talking-book machines, which are on permanent free loan to members.

The Drabble Project has been produced in a limited edition of 1,000 copies and a second book is planned. Printed copies can be obtained, price £5, from Becon Publications, Roger Robinson, 75 Rosslyn Avenue, Harold Wood, Essex RM3 0RG.

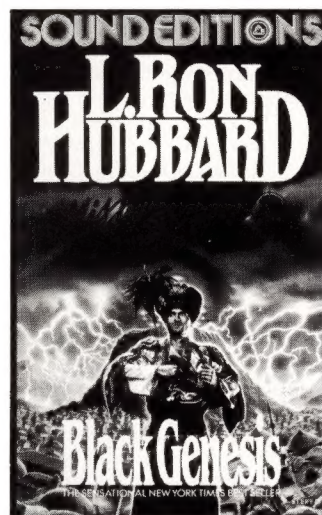
L RON TAPED TOO

L Ron Hubbard's *Mission Earth Dekology*—that's ten books, folks—is also being transferred from the printed page to tape.

American publisher Random House has already put out *The Invaders Plan* and *Black Genesis* through its Sound Editions imprint. The double tape productions will come as something of a relief to fans who want to revisit the books but don't

want to read them again. They are, of course, also aimed at people with sight problems.

The productions include a small, though talented, cast and a liberal sprinkling of stereo sound effects. All the tapes can



be ordered through good bookstores, but as they're American imports your best bet is your local fantasy specialist.

Meanwhile, the dekology in print has reached a conclusion with volume ten, *The Doomed Planet*, released by New Era Publications. Volume three, *The Enemy Within*, is due shortly in paperback.



FANS DEMAND ACTION



FEAR'S Censorship Poll, held in our very first issue, has prompted some surprising results from the horror and fantasy fans at which it was aimed.

Readers are in agreement that the censorship laws are about right, and many believe that tightening of film regulations is required to enable more freedom for cinemagoers. But that does not mean that readers are happy with the system of classification in this country, particularly where videos are concerned.

The introduction of an Unrated classification—variously described as XX, 18+ and R(estricted)—proved to be popular with the majority of those who returned forms.

Similarly, a tightening of the film-classification system was favoured by the majority of readers, with the 15 certificate becoming a 16 and a new label provided for those films which are watchable for those under 13. 13 and 16 are, of course, the traditional so-called 'coming of age' times for children.

A few readers also suggested that the system should give

more information about the reasons for not allowing 15-year-olds into an 18-certificated movie. Certificates should be suffixed with the letters V for violence and S for sex after the 18.

Readers voiced no worries about the introduction of cable TV, although the threat of political indoctrination was an issue which struck a chord in nearly two-thirds of responders.

Although the system of film classification has been changed within the last decade to include 15 and PG certificates and rename X as 18, it has not changed substantially since it was introduced after the Second World War.

The British Government has for some time been interested in the field of film, video and TV classification, but no-one from either BBFC or the Home Office was available to comment on our findings and possible future restrictions on creative media . . . we hope to bring you the official response in our next issue.

John Gilbert
Managing Editor

BLACK IS BEAUTIFUL

The long night began at 9.30pm on Saturday, although the Black Sunday Festival, held at Manchester's Mayfair cinema, was due to open at midnight. With matchsticks to prop open his eyes, John Gilbert was there.

Despite the relatively small amount of publicity given to the event in the fan press and through **FEAR** eager fans queued to inquire after any remaining tickets.

There wasn't a spare moment as organisers **Malcolm Daglish** and **David Bryan** – the latter smartly attired in a dinner suit – set up the PA system while looking after the booking office and accepting calls from people asking for directions to the cinema.

Black Sunday was almost a sellout. The limited number of 500 fan plus 70 VIP seats were soon filled and the lights went down for the first film, a mediocre thriller called *Out of the Dark*. Released on US video several years ago, it concerns a clown-masked psycho who trails and murders a series of phone-sex callgirls. The movie has obviously been cut. Although some of the brutality of the murderer – who uses a baseball bat and croquet hoop to kill his victims – is suggested, several cuts have been made painfully obvious in the most violent scenes. The twist at the ending is predictable, but the movie has a nice pace, even if it's a little prosaic.

The wonderful *Paperhouse* followed and single handedly justified the long journey to Manchester. Brilliantly photographed, acted and directed, it tells the tale of a young girl who contracts glandular fever and starts having dreams about a deserted house on a lonely moor near the cliffs and sea.

The house, which is connected with her boredom-spawned doodles, does not, however, stay deserted for long. It's inhabited by a boy who cannot walk. His life and her destiny are held in the balance of her art and what she draws. She soon accepts that the sketches affect her dreams and, when she discovers that the little boy she visits in her sleep is real and has

multiple sclerosis, realises that she has the power to cure or kill him.

The movie has a slow, but fascinating, pace and if distributor Vestron does right by it, *Paperhouse* should get the same good reaction from audiences as it did at Black Sunday.

Lair of the White Worm wowed the festival audience in a different way to *Paperhouse*. The Ken Russell-directed picture about a giant worm trapped in a system of ancient caverns and fed by an avaricious vampiric beauty in the form of Amanda Donohoe, is hypnotic in its humour. Again there was little overt horror, but Russell showed that horror films can be made from more than exploding monsters.

Not so funny was *Elvira Mistress of the Dark*. I was strangely disappointed by it. The star, Cassandra Peterson, has always been a favourite of mine during trips to the States. Watching her perform in this eclectically constructed showcase about a recipe book of spells left her by her aunt made me shudder. She deserves better, and I just hope her image in the eyes of potential British fans doesn't suffer because of this appalling tripe.

Elvira was followed in the early morning by a breakfast break and a discussion panel during which a quiet Shaun Hutson, Stephen Gallagher, Ramsey Campbell, yours truly John Gilbert, Peter Atkins and Bob Keen attempted to stay awake. A round-up of current projects was swiftly followed by a heated discussion on censorship in which Peter 'Hellbound' Atkins and special effects master Bob Keen talked heapfuls about *Hellbound* and a little about the new *Nightbreed* movie.

The next film was *To Die For*, a replacement for the most eagerly awaited *Bad Taste*, the Colourbox Video production which was seized at customs. I watched *To Die For* for plot and action rather than the special effects which were not up to the standard of the droopy



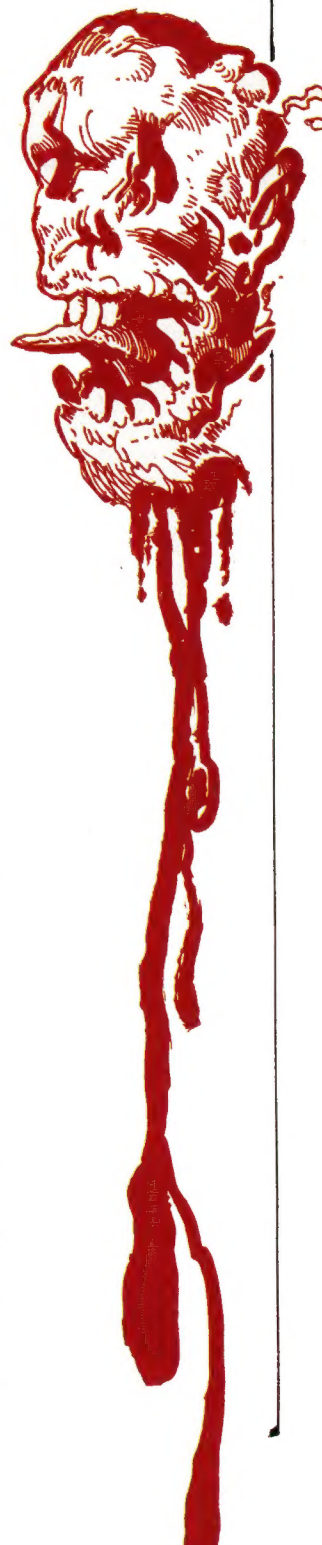
Fright Night II, shown later. It concerns two vampire brothers, continually at war. One, Vlad, killed the other's sweetheart yonks ago and is out for revenge on any girl that Vlad takes a fancy to.

It's an interesting low-budget production which looks better than it should. The performances are underplayed and mediocre when compared to the wonderful *Lair of the White Worm*, but the film looks like a supernatural *Miami Vice*.

Lady in White, a two-hour, beautifully shot and acted ghost story/melodrama, which is not based on the Wilkie Collins book was up next. It raised polite applause, but by now the audience was after blood – something which was admittedly in short supply during this horror fest. The appalling *Fright Night II* supplied it in some part at the back end of the event, but this disastrous film fails in every area despite a wonderful in-joke in which two of the she-vampire's entourage are dead ringers for Splatterpunks John Skipp and Craig Spector, and a loony inmate who could be mistaken for Tim Burton on a dark night. It's a joke lost on people who haven't seen the dreadsome duo.

The final film, *Dead Heat*, replaced *Nightmare on Elm Street IV* because the print didn't appear in the country on time. It's a competently handled buddy-buddy cop film in which one partner is killed on a drugs raid and is brought back to life by a zombifying process to hunt his killers. Sounds like *Maniac Cop* times two, but, I feel, is infinitely more violent.

Black Sunday an almost-complete success. One minor point regarding the films: the good balance was kept to some degree between subtle and overtly violent horror, but some fans were disappointed by the lack of gore. I would agree, but, having seen some of the problems the organisers had in obtaining prints for anything, I would slap the lads on the back and look forward to next time.



Q: What do the following authors & artists have in common?

Douglas Adams Brian Aldiss Isaac Asimov

Iain Banks Clive Barker David Brin John Brosnan Jim Burns Ramsey Campbell
Angela Carter Joy Chant Simon Ian Childers Adrian Cole Edmund Cooper Louise Cooper
Richard Cowper Roger Dean Terrance Dicks Thomas M Disch Stephen Donaldson Harlan
Ellison Chris Foss David Gemmell David Gerrold William Gibson Charles L Grant
Harry Harrison Frank Herbert James Herbert Philip E High Robert Holdstock Shaun Hutson
Diana Wynne Jones Jeff Jones Peter Jones Mike Kaluta Colin Kapp Leigh Kennedy
Bernard King Nigel Kneale Harry Adam Knight Katherine Kurtz David Langford
Stephen Lawhead Anne McCaffrey Ian Marter Rodney Matthews Michael Moorcock
Chris Morgan Larry Niven Frederik Pohl Jerry Pournelle Terry Pratchett
Christopher Priest Robert Rankin Kim Stanley Robinson Michael Scott Rohan
Geoff Ryman Josephine Saxton Bob Shaw Robert Silverberg Brian Stableford
Theodore Sturgeon Patrick Tilley EC Tubb Lisa Tuttle Freda Warrington Ian Watson
Tim White David Wingrove Gene Wolfe Patrick Woodroffe Berni Wrightson Jonathan Wylie

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A: They've all had signing sessions with ANDROMEDA!

Q: What do the following authors & artists have in common?

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A: They've all had signing sessions with ANDROMEDA!

A new year and, despite the gloom of the old, Philip Nutman finds that the approach of spring does wonders for the movie-maker's morale. A major independent film company is back on its feet, a band of new pictures gets the go ahead, and one of our favourite writing duos wins one of the screenplay contracts of the year

LET MY INFORMATION GO

DATELINE: New York City,
December 22 1988

*'I read the news today, oh boy . . .'
'I read the news today, oh boy . . .'*

The first thing that was brought to my attention this morning was the tragic crash of Pan Am Flight 103 in Lockerbie, Scotland.

I was thinking about what to write for this issue's column and, as I've noted before, a regular magazine spot is both a blessing and a curse. With only snippets of information to pass on and future projects of note too far ahead to warrant detailed discussion – or publicists being paranoid about releasing sufficient information – I was prepared to sit at my word processor and brainstorm. Before I could do so, however, *The New York Post* shouted its block headline at me. The news was immediately

more sobering than the cup of coffee I was about to consume.

The thought of more than 250 people losing their lives in an instant, especially at Christmas time, is one that should touch us all deeply and its reminded me that there are more important things in life than mere entertainment. Also, try as I might, I could not escape this sobering news for two reasons: one, I flew into New York on the same flight, the same plane, two weeks ago – there but for the grace of God go I rests heavy in my thoughts right now – and two, because the media net that surrounds our lives wouldn't allow me to forget it.

Although I didn't turn on the television or the radio this morning I couldn't avoid the news. The crash was headline material and screamed to get my attention. Part of me didn't want to know, didn't want to think how the relatives of the dead were feeling. Not because

I don't care but because I can easily project my thoughts and emotions into another person's point of view, and sometimes it hurts. And I'm under pressure with several magazine deadlines to contend with and need a clear head. The media, however, won't let me be.

The thoughts I've had about the crash have made a link with another subject, one that may appear totally unconnected.

The subject of censorship.

Yes, the old pain in the backside; the right to choose what you see, read or hear.

So, what's the connection?

Freedom of information.

Freedom of information in the Reagan/Bush and Thatcher years has become a big lie. Real life is serious, it's a constant question of life and death, yet we are continually denied access to information concerning matters that directly affect our lives. We have a right to know what's going on in the world, but we also have a right to censor information ourselves. It is our personal right to choose what we want to see, read and hear, so long as it doesn't hurt other people.

This morning my right to choose was swept aside by the media's appetite for destruction; recently my right to read what I want in my own home was violated for the fourth time this year by *The Powers That Be*.

When we think of censorship it is usually in relation to films – as books are seemingly not perused with the same vigour. But it's come to light that HM Customs are censoring my mail. In the past few months four packages of horror literature or

related materials which were sent to my London address have disappeared without trace.

Coincidence? I don't think so.

A screw up at the Post Office? Probably not.

The most recent package was a copy of *Taboo*, the adult-oriented horror comic anthology edited and published by Steve Bissette, and artwork previews of other projects he's working on. Steve sent a similar package to editor John Gilbert the same day; he received his, I didn't receive mine.

And I'm not the only one working in the field who is experiencing such difficulties. Several other genre writers have had the same thing happen to them. Books, research materials and video tapes just disappear into a black hole with no explanation.

I feel my privacy has been invaded, my personal freedom violated.

I felt violated this morning each time I walked past a newsstand and every newspaper screamed '258 Dead In Plane Horror'. Yes, death is real and inescapable, but I don't need it rammed down my throat. Yet I had no choice because of the media web in which we are trapped.

I chose to have Steve Bissette send me a copy of *Taboo*, but someone at Customs opened the package and decided, in their infinite wisdom, that it was obscene and confiscated it.

In my view, the crash of Flight 103 was more horrifying, more disturbing than any book I've ever read. Or a horror comic.

In the eyes of Authority, however, imagination and

Steve Bissette



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fantasy appear to be deemed a threat to our lives. If we are denied the opportunity to dream and share those dreams with others, regardless of how dark they may be, we begin to lose aspects we all share, for dark visions contrast our hopes and aspirations.

Take those away, and existence runs the risk of becoming as dark and seemingly empty as the lives of those people who lost a loved one in the Pan Am crash.

BUDDING ANTHOLOGISTS

Avid anthology readers should turn their attention to a couple of recently published and worthwhile collections.

Women of Darkness, edited by Kathryn Ptacek, is the first short story collection penned entirely by women writers and contains 20 examples of varied horror fiction. Published in hardcover by Tor Books, 49 West 24 Street, New York, NY 10010, it features works by Lisa Tuttle, Tanith Lee and a bunch of ladies whose names will be new to most readers unless they follow the small press scene. As with most anthologies, the content is hit and miss at times, though overall the standard of the writing is fairly good.

Blood is not Enough, edited by Ellen Datlow, could be described as the first post-modern vampire anthology. As Datlow points out in her terse, perceptive introduction, our expectations of vampire fiction have grown in sophistication over the years and have had a tremendous effect on that sub-genre. Anne Rice's *Vampire Chronicles* (*Interview with the Vampire*, *The Vampire Lestat*, and *Queen of the Damned*) are a case in point. But the stories in this collection, a nicely packaged collection from William Morrow, 105 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016, pose new questions, explore other themes. Ms Datlow, the fiction editor at *Omni* magazine, has done the descendants of Count Dracula proud.

Dead Lines, the latest book from John Skipp and Craig Spector, is also a short story collection, though one with a difference: it's a novel. Confused? *Dead Lines* presents the bulk of their short fiction within a larger framework; the stories are the legacy of a dead writer who wants to come back from the other side and they are discovered by two women who move into his former apartment. Paperback, from



Munsters double bill. The originals next to their wax copies

Bantam, 666 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10103. (See review in the next issue of **FEAR**).

Fellow Splatterpunk David J. Schow has completed



The Shaft, his second novel, which will appear from Tor either at the end of this year or sometime in 1990. *Silver Scream*, the cinematic terror fest anthology he edited, (reviewed last issue), can be found at your local specialist book store.

BOIL SUCKERS

Skipp and Spector have beaten off all comers and won the assignment to write the screenplay of *Nightmare on Elm Street V*. They delivered the first draft in January. The film is due to go into production by late-spring.

Clive Barker's *Nightbreed* is scheduled to open in America in mid-August. Principal photography will commence at Pinewood in March, with one week of location work in Canada to follow (see exclusive story in *Union Hack*).

Independent writer-

producer-director Cameron Truscot, a former commercials editor from Akron, Ohio, is planning to make a cheerful movie called *Boilsucker*, a project he promises will 'be the most disgusting horror movie ever'. We can't wait for this one.

Child's Play, the new Tom Holland movie, cleaned up at the US box-office towards the end of 1988, proving that Freddy isn't the only horror character people want to see. Chucky, the possessed Good Guys doll, proved popular to the tune of £27 million.

Brain Dead, the new movie written and directed by Peter Jackson, the 26-year-old New Zealand goremeister who made *Bad Taste*, starts lensing February 1 down under. Expect more black comedy splat in this one, budget at £1 million.

Following the cancellation of *The Shadow Over Innsmouth*, *Re-Animator* director Stuart Gordon is about to remake Poe's *The Pit and the Pendulum* in Italy. Charles Band produces.

Paramount Pictures are releasing Stephen King's *Pet Sematary*, directed by Siesta helmer Mary Lambert, this February in the US. The film, which stars Dale Midkiff and Denise Crosby, should reach British screens by the end of the year. Former Herman Munster, Fred Gwynne, also appears.

Speaking of *The Munsters*, MCA Television have remade the Sixties series with a new cast. John Schuck from *McMillan and Wife* is Herman, Lee Meriwether, a regular from the Seventies detective show

Barnaby Jones, is Lilly, and Grandpa is played by Howard Morton. Eddie and Marilyn are played by newcomers Jason Marsden and Hilary Van Dyke, respectively. Being a *Munsters* purest, I'm happy to report this revival isn't long for the world—it sucks. Stick to the reruns.

NEW WORLDS TO CONQUER

After all the fuss, *Hellbound: Hellraiser II* was finally passed by the MPAA with an R rating and only lost two minutes in the process. New World, its US distributor, opened it in 1180 cinemas across the land of Ronalds—Reagan and McDonald—on December 23 to some good reviews and rather healthy box-office results: £3 million over the Christmas weekend. Barker is in town for a couple of days to promote it and finish casting *Nightbreed*, resulting in some meaty coverage in *The New York Post* immediately following Christmas.

And on a final note, the future appears to be brighter for New World, who got themselves into some serious financial trouble over the past two years. According to an interview with company head Bob Rahme in the festive issue of *Variety*, the sale of Marvel Comics—which the company bought in 1986—has meant they are back on their feet and have £60 million for production this year. Yes, *Hell on Earth: Hellraiser III* will go into production this year. More news next issue.

Here's a dead letter box, but the dead can't write so it's up to you to fill the page. Just drop us a line to tell us about your rants or raves, or tell us what you want to see in the magazine. Send letters or artwork to **RAISING THE DEAD, FEAR, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB.**

WAITING GAME

Dear **FEAR**

Please! Please! Please! Could you do something on **Tobe Hooper** in the future, with possibly a progress report on *Texas Chainsaw Massacre 2*? Why is it taking so long to reach Britain, as it must be at least two years since its release in America – it can't surely all be down to censorship problems?

Also on the subject of films seen in the US and not here, are we likely to be viewing *Combat Shock* or *Lunchmeat* in the near future?

David Wose, Redruth, Cornwall

I'm pleased to be able to tell you that we've recently wrapped an interview with Mr Hooper, which we'll run in the near future. Officially, Texas Chainsaw Massacre 2 has suffered a similar fate to that of the video version of The Exorcist, and it's unlikely that you'll see the movie on screen or rental tape for some time, if ever.

Unofficially, the fan underground has known for some time that there are prints of Massacre 2, Combat Shock and Lunchmeat already available on a growing black market in the UK. As one low-budget film distributor recently told me, 'it's not just the BBFC you have to worry about, it's the customs'. See the story in American Nightmares this issue . . .

HARDBACK HITCH

Dear **FEAR**

Do you intend to produce lists of new books (from authors such as King, Straub, Grant, Herbert, Barker, Campbell, Bradbury and so on) some time before release in hardback? I ask because I prefer to buy hardbacks where possible, and I find it difficult to find new hardbacks by the above authors (with the exception of Herbert and King).

Finally, I would like to ask about a really talented writer, **Chet Williamson**. I have two of his books, *Soulstorm* and *Ash Wednesday*, and I wonder if there are any more available or

close to being released.

Simon Andrews, Ross on Wye, Herefordshire

Unfortunately, hardbacks are often difficult to find because publishers only print about 5,000-10,000 of each title. The big money's in paperbacks, though once a hardback is autographed it can often become more valuable than the cover price – especially if it's a first edition.

We already carry information about books which aren't going to be published for some time, but publishers are sometimes wary of announcing a popular author's book before it's launched, because their phone lines often become jammed with people asking about availability.

As for Chet Williamson, his latest British book, in paperback, is



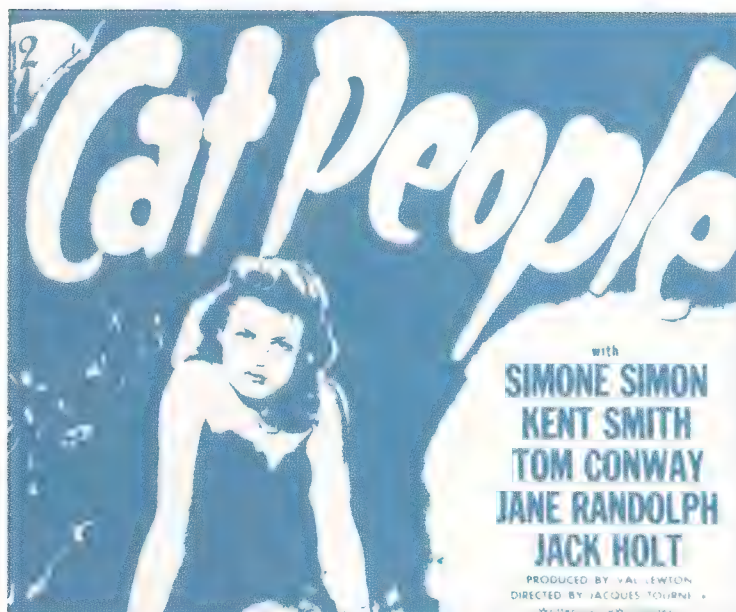
Chet Williamson

Lowland Rider, which is published by Headline. You can read an interview with Chet in FEAR 4.

SLOPPING OUT

Dear **FEAR**

Nobody should approve of censorship for its own sake, but under the constraints of censorship the writers and film-makers of old gave us better and often more terrifying works. I say 'more terrifying' because they just left so much to the audience's imagination, and what you can create in your own mind can so often be far worse than what another person thrusts upon you.



What better example can there be than the two versions of *Cat People*? **Val Lewton's** 1942 version, lacking in visually-explicit horrors, can still cause real shivers. The 1982 remake, with its now-obligatory spattering of flesh and blood, is generally a waste of space.

Has public taste really become so jaded that it must have films like this, or are the film-makers – sheltering under the cloak of 'artistic freedom' – giving us what they enjoy making without caring whether we want it or not?

I agree that some realism is necessary; after all, we know that a man shot in the chest doesn't really just sigh and collapse forward onto a clean shirt. However, we seem to have gone beyond simple realism and are a very long way into the realm of sheer bad taste.

It's far past the time for a return to subtlety in both horror literature and films. I'm sure that a poll of genuine fans of all ages would show that there aren't all that many who are so immature or warped that they must have their thrills ladled out of a surgeon's slop bucket.
Brian Mooney, Dover, Kent

I certainly respect your views but we're not simply talking good taste or realism here. We're talking freedom to watch and write about the age in which we live – which is far different from the time in which Lewton made his film. Realism is taken further – too far – as are some of the boundaries of what we can show on screen. I would also say that many of FEAR's readers enjoy watching the gore-packed films, as well as the subtler ones, and I can assure you that the ones I've met aren't immature!

DÉJÀ VU DISGUST

Dear **FEAR**

Let me be the first to tell you the initial promise your magazine exhibited has evaporated into a disappointing collection of mediocre fiction, warmed-over rumour-mongering and, most pathetic of all, reprints from other magazines.

Is it just my imagination or did I not read an identical article by **Tim Lucas** interviewing **David Cronenberg** in a very recent issue of *Fangoria*? Oh, and isn't that **Marc Shapiro** piece just a tad reminiscent of one he wrote for that selfsame magazine? The answers are obviously yes.

I assume *Fangoria* is still readily available in Britain, so readers are paying a hefty price for the privilege of reading reprints. You don't even have the honesty to identify them as such. I find this attitude utterly reprehensible. You may cancel my subscription with the third issue and issue a refund.
Gary Kimber, Ontario, Canada

Though I believe this particular letter was written for less than altruistic reasons, the points raised require some answers. Yes, there are similarities between the Cronenberg articles because, as each editor has since discovered, the same bulky manuscript was delivered to three magazines – Spin is the other publication concerned.

*The respective editors took their choice of quotes and I bought first British serial rights. I was, therefore, quite entitled to ask for an injunction against *Fangoria* and Spin when their articles appeared in Britain. But as we reach a larger British audience than *Fangoria* I*

felt that such a move was immature and, by then, a little late. I must also stress that readers did, for the most part, get a different interview from those in Fangoria and Spin – only a few quotes were reproduced.

As to the Marc Shapiro interview with Chuck Russell, it bore no resemblance to the Fangoria piece – only the author was the same – and was highlighting the film for British readers.

After all, it's not uncommon for freelance writers in any area to sell an interview or idea to more than one publication, as long as they then write the pieces in quite different ways.

Would you suggest that I don't carry US movie material simply because the movie has already been promoted by American film magazines? I think not. If we all did that our coverage would be very limited.

CARPENTER COLLAPSE?

Dear **FEAR**

What's happened to **John Carpenter**? Last year we saw *Prince of Darkness* and enough information about his next movie, *They Live*, to provide a horror fan's staple diet for years to come. So where is the film? Has it suddenly dropped off the face of the earth or did it bomb at the American box office?

Also, could you settle an argument? I say that John Carpenter directed a film before *Halloween* but I don't know the name. My brother thinks *Halloween* was his first. Sort it out, could you?

David Morris, Plympton, Devon

Yes, *They Live* is taking its time to fly across the Atlantic – but no, it's by no means a flop in the States. Guild has the rights to distribution in Britain and, from the little that we've been told, we can expect to see it now in the early summer.

As to your brotherly dispute, John's first full-length film was called *Dark Star*. Made as a college project in a garage it won him the notice of the film industry. If only such luck was easier to come by...

ANGER AT DENIALS

Dear **FEAR**

Why do some film directors insist on either denying their

creations or, when they attempt to leave the genres which have made them popular, deny that they made horror or fantasy films?

The worst offender this year



is **Wes Craven**. In your interview with him (last issue) and elsewhere, he has constantly said that he's left the horror genre behind and that Freddy Krueger is no longer his creation.

While I can see that Freddy has changed into a more commercial figure, he hasn't changed that much, and for Craven to blame his film

company is ridiculous – perhaps even sour grapes! Also, he says that his new film is not a horror movie. How much more horror could you want in a movie than voodoo and zombies?

Ian Bamford, Nazing, Essex

Surely Wes has a perfect right to describe his film in any way he wants, though we must admit it can be a little gut-wrenching at times.

As to the thorny issue of Freddy, his persona has changed since Mr Craven had any direct control over him, and to some people his comic and perverted sides are a little difficult to balance. All we can say is that he's never been more popular.

Maybe that says something about our society but I think it has more to do with the clever – cleaver? – way in which he's been sold in both the States and Britain.

ALRIGHT JOHN

Dear **FEAR**

I think the casting of **Elton John** as the Penguin in *Batman* is even more inspired than that of giving **Jack Nicholson** the job of The Joker – that's unless the tabloid press have got it wrong again.

What about the other *Batman* characters? Have these been cast yet? I'd like to see **Roddy**



Nicholson

McDowell reprise his role as Bookworm, though perhaps not wearing that stupid get-up that he wears on the TV.

Charles Mason, Hove, Sussex

Well, well. The Sun certainly got it right about *The Penguin*, but had to cheat on its pictures with a little airbrushing of the Nicholson mush. As for the rest of the rumours – and they are rumours – the only one which we can substantiate is that there might be a few sequels.

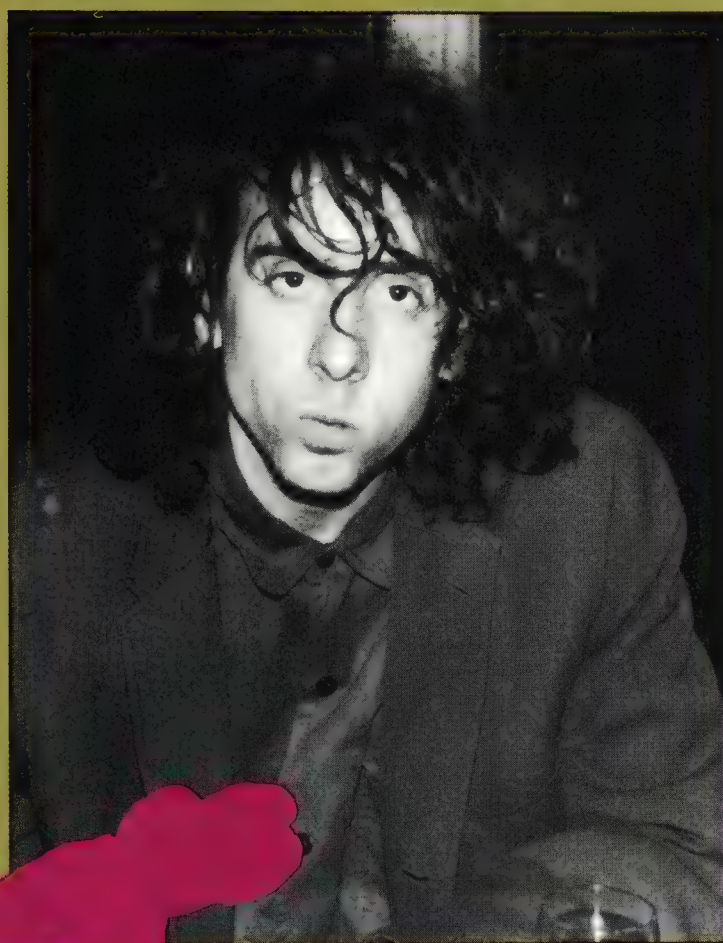
But the film world is fickle, and I'm sure that the first movie has to prove itself before Warner Bros commits such an incredible budget to a second film. We'll get you the news when it happens but, meanwhile, the Tim Burton interview in this issue of **FEAR** should keep you up-to-date with everything official that's happening on the Batscene.



DIE LAUGHING

BATMAN director Tim Burton is adding 'absurd humour' to the superhero's aura of darkness, and despite casting disputes he remains faithful to a personal image drawn largely from the TV series.

Clive Barker discussed comics and the dark knight with Tim Burton; Mark Salisbury eavesdropped on their wide-ranging conversation.



Tim Burton is in an unenviable position. As director of the long-awaited *Batman* movie he's caught in the crossfire between comic-book purists and fans of the

Adam West TV series. Already the former Disney animator's choice of Michael Keaton in the title role has been greeted with derision, though his casting of Jack Nicholson as The Joker appears positively inspired.

And previous credits reveal him to be a unique, highly stylised talent. The shorts *Vincent* and *Frankenweenie*, for those fortunate enough to have caught them, were works of illuminating vision and

prodigious promise – a promise fulfilled in both *Pee-Wee's Big Adventure* and *Beetlejuice*.

Beetlejuice is released by Warner Home Video in April, *Batman* is set for a summer release in the States. Until then we can only wait.

CB I know we can't talk about *Batman* explicitly but we can talk about it obliquely. You have casted your picture the most eclectic way possible (Keaton, Nicholson, Basinger, Jerry Hall, Elton John). I have casted *Nightbreed* similarly. We have made the decision that going the legit route didn't suit us.

TB I find casting to be a fairly stream-of-consciousness thing. I find casting very difficult because I know I've been talked out of things

in the past. I seem to have the same kind of ideas. Sometimes I think they're good, and sometimes I'm very, very happy I'm talked out of things.

CB This is a great one. Tell me things you've been talked out of.

TB This one wasn't necessarily a bad idea but I think at one point I wanted Sammy Davis Jr for *Beetlejuice*.

CB I love that. I think that's a great idea, not that Keaton wasn't brilliant.

TB Absolutely. I remember when they all heard that they (laughs).

CB When I first went into your offices in Warner Brothers three years ago and we talked, you had all those wonderful posters of Japanese robots on the wall. I said 'What are your obsessions?' and you said 'cartoons and *Batman*'.

TB Well, I really love the image. I was never a giant comic-book fan. I've always loved the image of it; *Batman* and *The Joker*. I've always loved *The Joker*.

CB So what do you make of *The Killing Joke*?

TB I love it.

CB It's stunning, isn't it.

TB I love it. It's my favourite. It's the first comic I've ever loved really.

CB Did you like *Watchmen*?

TB I'll tell you the truth. The reason I've never been a comic-book fan, it started when I was a child. I could never read them. I could never tell which box I was supposed to read (laughs). I couldn't, I couldn't tell. That's why I love *The Killing Joke*, because for the first time I could tell which one to read.

CB But that's spectacular. Maybe I'm a bigger comic-book fan than you. Do you collect them?

TB I have *The Killing Joke* (laughs). No, not really.

CB So here's an interesting paradox. Here is one of the top three comic-book characters – let's say Crazy Cat is one of them; Superman is another. Perhaps

Batman is the third. Who would intervene? Orphan Annie? Maybe *Peanuts*. Certainly Batman is one of the top ten.

TB Yeah, you might even say that in terms of superheroes to me it was Batman and Superman that came out on top.

CB Here you are, directing the movie of one of the two, by your definition, and you don't like comic strips. Here's a paradox. I love this paradox. How do you feel about this?

TB I actually feel very pure about this because you got two groups of people, and I've been involved with it for long enough to know there are people who are comic-book purists who say 'Fuck the TV series, it's a joke. It was the most horrible thing to ever happen.' But then on the other hand there is just as large a group of people, if not even larger, who love the TV series. And I'm actually a kid who grew up on the series and actually loved the series.



Beetlejuice

GO WEST?

CB Now how do you deal with the problem of the Adam West lobby?

TB For me I realised very early on . . .

CB That you can't satisfy everybody?

TB Yeah, there's no way to do it. What you just hope is that you're true to the spirit. And luckily comic books have gone through some sort of other phase where it's much more acceptable. They've made things darker. They've taken them into the psychological.

CB So how does that sit beside Frank Miller?

TB I think it's different to that. For me it's very clear: the TV series was campy, the regeneration, the new comics are totally rebelling against that. So it's one extreme to the other. For me, I just have to be true

to the spirit of it and what I got out of it.

CB The spirit of . . . ?

TB The absurdity of it. Part of what interested me is that it's a human character who dresses up in the most extremely vulgar costumes in some ways.

CB Are you following the fetish of some of that?

TB It's hard to say what will float to the surface, because you never quite know what's going to come through strongly. I think it will be funny, but there's also a darkness. I remember the first treatment of something done on Batman, but it was Superman basically – the names had been changed. So they didn't acknowledge any of the freakish nature of it, and I found it the most frightening thing I'd ever read.

CB When you say freakish do you mean the fact that this guy's like vengeful and shit?

TB No, the fact that he puts on a costume and they just treated it as if he's doing it for good and that's it. You can't do that.

CB The TV series does that. The TV series says here is this guy. We take this at face value and this is what he does. *Barbarella* is like that as well, because *Barbarella* also comes from a comic strip and it has the feel of a living comic strip and it is both camp and kitsch, and also in a bizarre way, and this may just be me, it is moving.

TB It's hard for me to comment on the tone because I don't know quite how it will all end up and I love that actually. I love the organicness of that.

INTO THE DARKNESS

CB Are we going to see the Tim Burton animation?

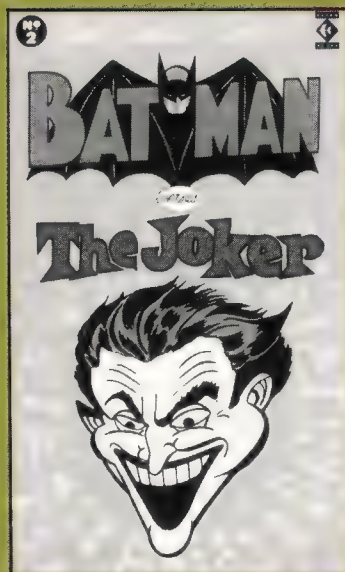
TB It's difficult for me to say since it's not done, but I actually feel it's kind of closer and actually feel there's images and scenes and things that are close to the tone that I want to get, that I've always tried to get.

CB Dark?

TB It's a mix of things.

CB Is it going to be *Batman: The Movie* or just *Batman*?

TB I'm very against *The Movie*, it makes it sound so cheap.



CB Like there was any other kind of Batman.

TB It feels like a product.

CB Yeah, like *Batman: The T-Shirt* (laughs).

TB But I can't imagine anybody thinking they're going to see the TV series.

CB Are you an admirer at all of the Superman movies or any parts of the Superman movies?

TB I have never felt there has been a totally successful comic-book movie made. At least that I've seen . . .

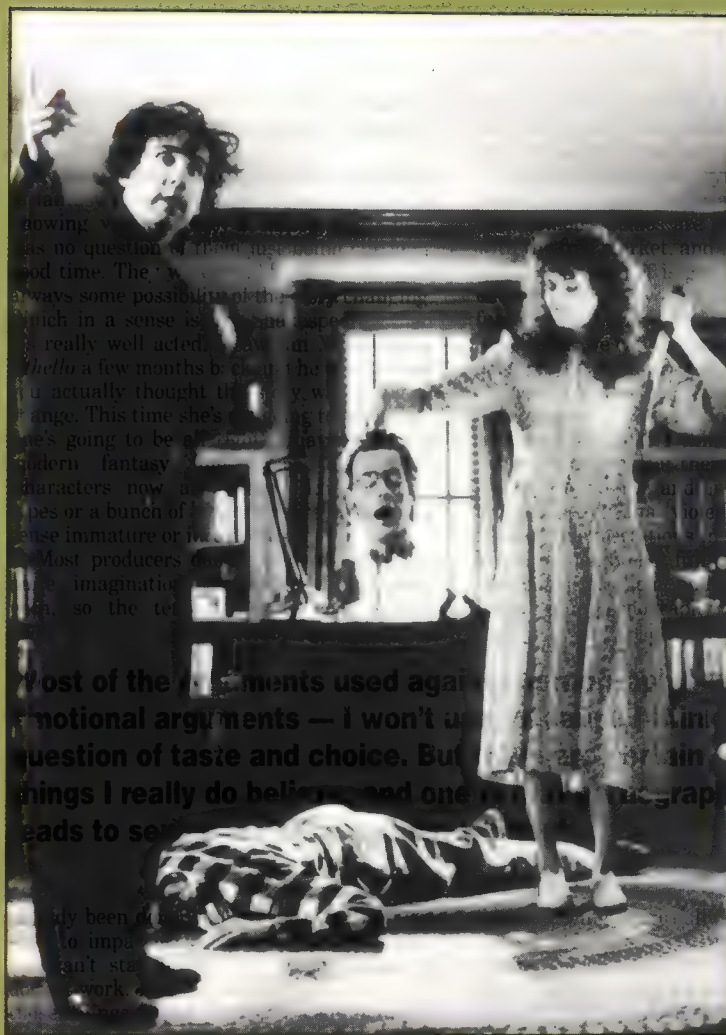
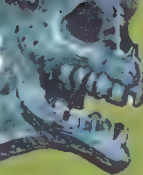
CB Well, I'd go back to *Barbarella*. It's pure comic strip turned into a movie.

TB They either don't capture the look or the feel of a comic. I thought *Superman* was well done but in terms of capturing the very specific feel of a comic book it didn't really do it. I love the old Fleischer *Superman* cartoons: the colour and the intensity and the strength of them. You miss that.

CB I hate the *Batman* TV series. I hate it because it doesn't have the courage to be heroic and do all the things that Bob Kane [creator of *Batman*] intended him to do. If you want to make a camp series then you invent something called Squirrel Man, and you tell the story of Squirrel Man and you have a joke at his expense. But the fact is Bob Kane wrote the story about a kid who watches his parents murdered, who suffers, who is obsessive, and what happens is the makers of the TV series trivialise all that.

TB And so they capitalise on a really powerful image.

"Here you are, directing the movie of one of the two greatest comic-book superheroes, and you don't like comic strips. I love this paradox."



Tim Burton directs a sinister scene in *Beetlejuice*.

CB Right, and so they get the best of both worlds and fuck them. It makes me mad.

TB In a way it's real exploitation. I remember in school, in design class, we talked about the five or ten most powerful graphic images that are the most recognisable images in the world. It was Coca-Cola, Mickey Mouse,

CB & TB (in unison) The swastika.

TB And the Batman logo. It really taps into something with everybody.

CB But one of the things I think it taps into is the dark. Bats live in the dark. Bats are things of night, and one of the things with the TV series was

TB It never took place at night.

CB And if it did, it was Hollywood night.

TB In fact, I don't remember it being night at all (laughs).

CB Right, if it was night it was a kind of pale blue night (laughs). Pee-Wee was somebody else's mythology, in a sort of way Batman is Bob Kane's mythology; those characters have a history. *Beetlejuice* didn't have a history.

TB If something is interesting to do, or if you can take something to another, then I think the idea of doing something else with another thing is great. It has to reach a new plateau; it has to be an exploration or be more interesting, because the good thing about doing something first is you have the interest and you have that excitement of the unknown.

CB In a sort of way *Beetlejuice* comes out of the dark, slaps you across the face, and you say 'My God I've never seen anything quite like this before'. Now, though, I think you've done the definitive Pee-Wee picture and we all look forward to the definitive Batman picture. *Beetlejuice* is Burton and [Michael] McDowell distilled; and *Vincent* was Burton distilled; and *Frankenweenie* was Burton distilled. Now how do you deal with the change of dealing with somebody else's mythology? You've done it twice now over a period of time, with Pee-Wee and Batman.

TB I actually don't think about it. I can't think about it. I wouldn't have got involved with Pee-Wee or Batman if I didn't obviously find something in myself that it echoed; and within that it's my own feeling about it.

I remember when I first met Bob Kane, and I think he was very

happy with what Sam [Hann, *Batman* screenwriter] and I had done [with the script], and I still feel it's the same thing; he was as freaked out as the rest of them about certain choices in it, but it's also full of holes.

Casting Michael Keaton... my God, he's not the image of Bruce Wayne, but the image of The Joker is this real thin so-and-so, and it's a bit elitist to say Jack Nicholson's perfect. Well, he is perfect but he's certainly not the comic-book image. So people's bible seems to change.

If you look at the *Batman* encyclopedia the fucking thing changes every fucking week. Basically, because if you think about the reality of it, comic-book writers say 'God, what are we going to do this week? Let's change the history of how Robin was created.'



Michael Keaton

CB Does that happen?

TB Oh yeah, I have this book, *The Encyclopaedia of Batman*, and you get one thing, and then another, and this happened. There is no such thing as a bible. I always react against single-mindedness, which you find in Hollywood a lot and you find in anything. You can't think about it; I think about being true to what I loved about the original idea, and I think in the spirit of it it's close to Bob.

CB But does that finally matter?

TB There's still such a negative reaction from comic-book purists to the TV series. I mean, there's a bit of humour in *The Killing Joke* but it's still of a very, very, very, very dark nature, and I think what we've got in ours is... there is a lot of darkness in it in some ways, maybe even psychologically darker, but in other ways there's a bit more absurd humour, which I think is necessary.

"There is no such thing as a bible. I always react against single-mindedness, which you find in Hollywood a lot and you find in anything. You can't think about it; I think about being true to what I loved about the original idea, and I think in the spirit of it it's close to Bob."

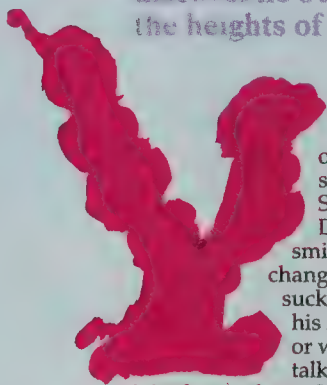


LORD OF THE RING

"As a writer generally I do not consciously draw from life. And I certainly wasn't drawing on India when I started to write things like *Covenant*"



As Stephen R. Donaldson launches his latest fantasy epic, *A MAN RIDES THROUGH*, he is also looking for new worlds to conquer. But, as he tells John Gilbert, his fans are in for a surprise when they discover he's already a crime writer and aims to scale the heights of science fiction.



You can read success from Stephen R. Donaldson's smile. It may change when he's sucking on one of his favourite cigars or when he's talking to fans, but it is always there. Similarly Donaldson's literary works, be they fantasy sagas or detective tales, have all shared acclaim from varying quarters.

You didn't know that he writes crime stories? Well, maybe that's because his other work, the fabulous *Chronicles of Thomas Covenant the Unbeliever* and his latest work, *Mordant's Need*, have acquired wider fame than his other fictions. He is, after all, one of the

founders of contemporary fantasy, although even that may not have happened if he had stayed in India, where he spent his early childhood, or taken up his father's profession.

'I perceived my father as being an almost magically powerful individual because, as an orthopaedic surgeon he did the type of medicine in India which was very highly regarded by the people who received his treatments. I had the experience many times of seeing people bow down in the street and prostrate themselves at his feet.'

At the age of nine, however, his perception of medicine changed when he decided to attend one of his father's operations on a man who's head had been gouged. 'We had just gotten started when there

was a powercut. They didn't want to stop so they put me on top of a tall stool with this big five-cell flashlight and I had to aim it at the wound so they could continue operating.'

'When I regained consciousness I was in the dressing room and from that moment I conceived a horror of all things bloody. After that it was just impossible to think about being a doctor.'

Despite some of the Indian currents which run through his books – *Thomas Covenant*, for instance, suffers from Hanson's disease – Stephen refutes the idea that his experiences have had a direct effect on his books. 'As a writer generally I do not consciously draw from life. And I certainly wasn't, on any conscious level, drawing on India when I



started to write things like *Covenant*. But it is easy to see ways in which India shaped my preconceptions and my tastes.

'India can be an adventuresome country. It's also a very grim country and for me the defining characteristics would be that it is a land of the exotic and the grim. I certainly see that in my work. I write very romantic, very lush, very magical fantasy in which incredibly cruel things happen, and I see that dichotomy as growing out of the Indian experience.'

BEYOND TOLKIEN

Donaldson sees his books as hopeful fantasies, despite the grim power, destruction and deceptions which run almost unbroken through the *Covenant* trilogies. He also, to some extent, disagrees with the distinction between horror, fantasy and so-called dark fantasy. 'If you aren't the kind of person who is striving through hope then you probably write horror instead of fantasy, and that is probably the only ultimate distinction between the two. Both fantasy and horror are kinds of writing in which the writer's really trying to plough his own psyche. Fantasy, I think is defined by being a journey inward, into the non-rational dimensions of the unconscious mind.'

'If you're going on that kind of journey you're going to encounter the same kind of elements in both genres. If you're questing inside yourself for a way to look at the abyss, then of course the abyss has to be there. Just the existence of the abyss is a painful and damaging concept that you have to be able to look at, and so the pain must be there. The only valid hopes are ones which involve an honest recognition of the problems. So, therefore, to write hopeful fiction you must be honest about the obstacles. And then, if you happen to be the kind of person who senses that the obstacles cannot be overcome, you're writing horror instead of fantasy.'

Though Donaldson has made his name in the publishers' category of fantasy he is keen to point out that there is a wide variety of types within that genre. He has, for instance, been compared with Tolkien, but sees wide dissimilarities between his *Covenant* books and those of *Lord of the Rings*. Both are, for example, linked with the creation of epic tales but Donaldson sees differences even in that sometimes misapplied term.

'Tolkien . . . essentially recreated epics in our language but he did it by divorcing them from relevance to the real world. The tradition of the epic is one in which

the writer is trying to answer the big questions about life. Even though the materials are fantastic or extreme, the content has always tended to be directly relevant to the audience. Tolkien opened the door to a genre that, at least in stereotypical literary terms, was closed. He brought large-scale fantastic, magical, big-canvas stories back into literature but he did it by explicitly denying any relevance to the real lives of the readers.

'Well now that the door is open I'm trying to take the next step. Now that you're allowed to write epics again I want to restore the relevance.'

THE MISSION

Although Donaldson denies any conscious literary association with India, his childhood transmigration to India from the States, and his repatriation when he was 15, did make life a little difficult and, again, it shows in his fiction.

'Most of my fantasy is culture shock fantasy. I think I had a lot of trouble making the adjustment and that gave me a lot of sensitivity to the subject. I think culture shock is real. It's not a trivial phenomenon more aesthetic individuals make up because they don't feel good. It's a profound break between perceptions of reality.'

'Going to India and suddenly finding myself not just surrounded by a language I couldn't understand but to have my parents suddenly stop talking a language that I understood was profoundly horrifying. I found going to India

upset my whole world view. I never considered making India my home base. Despite the shock, I knew I wanted to stay in the United States.'

India may have been a land of adventure and mysticism but the Donaldsons did not encourage their son to pick up the country's traits. Their attitude was not so much due to xenophobia but rather to a wish that Stephen should retain some of his American culture. His Indian tour of duty, for instance, took him through high school years but he returned to the States – as did many missionary children – to go to college.

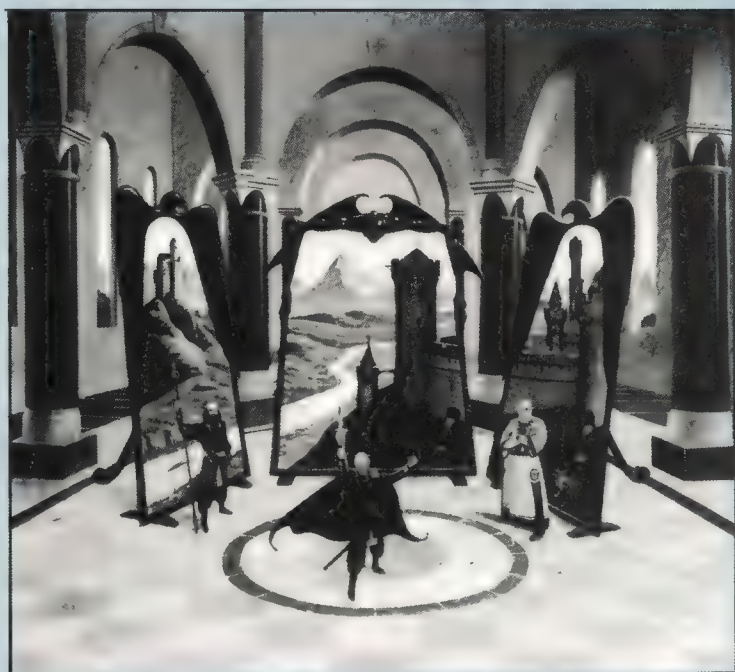
'My parents were on the mission field at a transitional time. The old system was xenophobic, and the missionaries – it was like they picked out the culture in the world that they most despised and they went there to preach. More and more there has come to be an appreciation of the culture that you're going to and a desire to enrich it, rather than change it, and that has made the missionary movement a more humane institution.'

'What I know about Indian history, and civilisation and mysticism, I studied at college in the United States. It wasn't available for me to study in India because the system was rigidly American.'

RINGING THE CHANGES

His interest in writing developed in the States but it was not primarily

"Uses of a Ring is it? Oh here's another obvious Tolkien rip-off. I looked at Tolkien and I looked at my story and I realised that I needed that damn ring more than he did!"



Cover artwork from *A Man Rides Through*



an interest in fiction. He was interested in reading what little fantasy he could lay his hands on but his mind had so far concentrated on education and growing up. 'I discovered very suddenly, in the course of about 20 minutes, that I was really interested in writing fiction. I'd started college as a chemistry major and I had this little epiphany and immediately switched to being an English major because I knew I had to study how writing was done.'

'My only goal was simply to tell stories on paper and I wanted to experience that through language. It was seven years before I actually tried to write a fantasy.'

Donaldson's files are full of juvenilia, none of which is directly related to fantasy. The stories and fragments that he wrote, however, did help him to develop the fiction techniques he uses in his novels. 'My approach to writing is that I try to conceive a story almost in the platonic sense: a pure shape. Then, my job as the writer is to discover the potential applications of this shape.'

'I, of course, am trying to bring out of the stories everything that I myself can find in them. I have a Masters in English Literature, I was halfway through a PhD before I dropped out to write. To some extent I am a trained reader, and I bring those skills to working on stories. An awful lot of what I work with -- symbolism, for instance -- it's stuff which seems to me to grow naturally out of the story. Now, I'm very conscious of it when I work with it. *The Use of a Ring*, for instance. Of all the things I did in *The Chronicles of Thomas Covenant* that was asking for trouble. Uses of a Ring is it? Here's Tolkien, here comes Donaldson, oh, here's another ring, an obvious Tolkien rip-off.'

'I was perfectly aware of the problems. But I looked at Tolkien and I looked at my story and I realised that I needed that damn ring more than he did. The ring is symbolically integral to my story and Tolkien could have used a magic amulet, he could have used a bracelet, anything you can forge and put magic writing on would have sufficed for Tolkien. Not for me! I had to go ahead with it because the symbolic significance was organic to the story.'

THE TRIGGER

The two Covenant Chronicle trilogies were each designed backwards, starting at *The Power that Preserves* in the first and *White Gold Wielder* in the second. Donaldson needs structure in order to create his fantastic worlds and that architecture helps in the writing process.

'I need to know exactly where my stories are going or I can't write at all. So I design the skeleton of the story very carefully. I don't always start at the same place. The Covenant books are unique in that the triggering idea had to do with the climax. The triggering ideas for other projects seem to come from somewhere else, but from there I need to design the climax before I can write the story. I need to know where we're going, why we're going there, and what elements are going to be necessary to make that ending happen. Without that I'm not ready to start.'

Thomas Covenant was no overnight success. Donaldson received 47 rejections from publishers before he hit the right slot. That's by no means a record, but looking back he can find a major reason why the first book got the thumbs down, although one of the excuses was the controversial use of a leprosy-ridden hero. 'For some it was explicitly the leprosy. They actually wrote to me 'leprosy is too disgusting, if you make him epileptic we'll reconsider'. This is absurd, but it happened.'

Once the first Covenant had been accepted Donaldson found little trouble in selling the other books, although he found the concept of a trilogy unnatural. Indeed, Mordant's Need, his latest fantasy series, is encompassed in two books instead of the conventional three. 'It's only one novel. In fact, it's a publishing convenience that it's published in two books. If you look at the structure, the story is actually divided into four parts, so they appear two per book, and it seems to me that the four-part structure comes to me more naturally than the three-part. For instance, the *Second [Covenant] Chronicles* was never intended to be a trilogy by me. The story is divided into eight parts and I thought we would publish two per book and we would have a tetralogy. I wasn't trying to write a trilogy.'

Donaldson started to write *Mordant's Need* in January 1984, though the inspiration for it had come years before whilst reading John Myer's *Silverlock*. 'I didn't actually like *Silverlock* at all but there's lots of nice little songs in it. And there it was, 'Steeped in the vacuum of her dreams, a mirror's empty 'til a man rides through'.'

CRIME'S A PASSION

Although Mordant's Need was Donaldson's next ambitious fantasy series after the *Chronicles* success he wasn't worried by a need to repeat that fantastic success. 'By the time a reader sees a book the author's already been done with it for a year. I've had a lot more transition time than you

might automatically guess. I do short stories, I've done crime novels. You know, these crime novels are wonderful for transitions. In tone and in character nothing could be further away from fantasy. It's like cleansing the palate, flushing out a certain part of the brain. I write these crime novels and, by the time you've done, the previous big project is ancient history, so I never feel any difficulty in starting fresh in that way.'

The crime novels may be an important part of Donaldson's career but his publisher is keen to keep them divorced from his fantasy work -- and who are we to put a spoke in the publishing process. 'A pseudonym was imposed upon me. Now that I have it I use it, but originally I got the books published without agreeing to use a pseudonym. I work very hard on these books as I do on any other and I certainly wouldn't have any hesitation on having my name on them. It was imposed on me for marketing reasons and marketing is the publishers' job. One has to assume that they know what they're doing.'

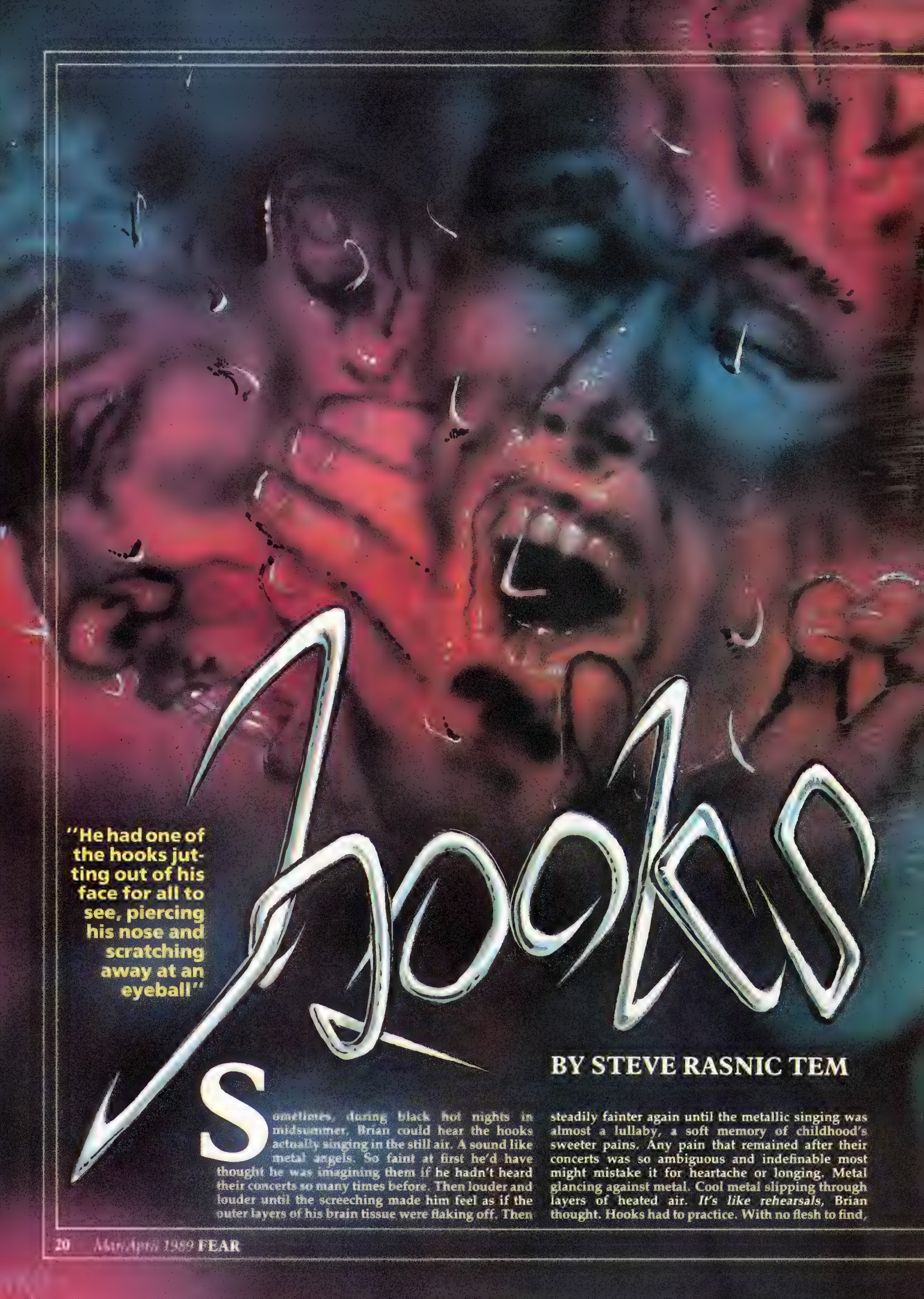
Donaldson's publishers certainly aren't as pushy as they sound. His latest saga, which won't be in print for some time, sees him looking for worlds in a new direction. 'The next big project will be science fiction and it's going to be in five instalments. I'm going to avoid cliffhanger endings. What I'm hoping is that this will be a sequence of novels in which each one will be a complete story so it won't make people crazy to read it in pieces. It is huge and it may be a while before the first instalment starts to see the light of day.'

The books will contain some accurate science detail but Donaldson also wants to maintain a good story. 'In a certain sense my model would be a writer like C.J. Cherryh. Now I'm not going to imitate C.J. Cherryh but there is a storyteller. She is not a hard science writer but she works very hard at trying to make the details believable because that adds credibility to the story. I'm going to work hard at trying to make my details believable but they will be as stage-setting and backdrop. They're not going to be the substance of the story.'

It sounds as if he could be out of circulation for some time. 'I hate disappearing but there's simply no way around it. I have got to have this project under control before any part of it gets published and it may easily be a couple of years before anybody sees a new book with my name on it.'

"Crime novels are wonderful for transitions. In tone and in character nothing could be further away from fantasy. It's like cleansing the palate"





"He had one of the hooks jutting out of his face for all to see, piercing his nose and scratching away at an eyeball"

Sometimes, during black hot nights in midsummer, Brian could hear the hooks actually singing in the still air. A sound like metal angels. So faint at first he'd have thought he was imagining them if he hadn't heard their concerts so many times before. Then louder and louder until the screeching made him feel as if the outer layers of his brain tissue were flaking off. Then

BY STEVE RASNIC TEM

steadily fainter again until the metallic singing was almost a lullaby, a soft memory of childhood's sweeter pains. Any pain that remained after their concerts was so ambiguous and indefinable most might mistake it for heartache or longing. Metal glancing against metal. Cool metal slipping through layers of heated air. *It's like rehearsals*, Brian thought. Hooks had to practice. With no flesh to find,

hooks liked to come back for the return ride.

The loading dock was far from the best job he'd ever had, but at least it paid enough to buy a cheap hotel room. Since he'd left home he'd lived on the streets mostly. And the hooks seemed to find you easiest when you were in the streets.

On the loading dock he didn't think much. The hooks had been leaving him alone.

"That first stack goes into the St Louis truck. Hold the rest until tomorrow." The supervisor wasn't much for conversation – all he wanted in this life was for everything to be on the right truck. Brian grabbed the first crate, starter motors, and waddled toward the truck in berth B.

Mack, the other loader, grabbed a lighter piece. "Hey, Brian. You gonna bust a gut that way."

"My gut."

Mack didn't say anything. Brian had let him know the first week when he didn't want to talk. It wasn't hard – most people he met on the street avoided him after their first contact. It was as if he had one of the hooks jutting out of his face for all to see, piercing his nose and scratching away at an eyeball.

Brian grabbed another case of starter motors off the top of the stack and let it drop with a painful jerk on his shoulder joints. He really ought to be using a lift for the heavier crates, but the supervisor didn't care, and the strain kept Brian's mind off other things, like singing metal, like serenading pain.

"What say a drink after the shift?" For some reason, Mack always wanted to make friends. Brian had been immediately suspicious; no-one wanted to be his friend. But Mack seemed harmless enough.

"I'd say yes, I guess."

"All right . . ." Mack said with his usual lunatic enthusiasm.

Brian moved the crates into the truck one at a time, listening carefully to the night air. Oh, he could hear them humming all right, out there in the dark beyond the dock, glancing off each other as if they were hungry, but they hadn't come any closer for a long time. Maybe they just wanted to reassure him that they were still there.

"Daddy . . ." The sound was metal.

"Daddeeee . . ." Definitely metal. A metallic crying in the darkness beyond the loading dock. But it sounded so much like his little girl Jackie, gone away and lost from him. He set the crate down, stepped off the dock, and walked toward the sound.

"Hey, Brian! Where you goin'? You know what Belkins'll do if he comes out!"

But Brian ignored him. He knew he could never go back. The hooks had found him again.

"Brian! What about that drink!"

A dozen or so hooks were on him in an instant – small ones, like stinging, biting insects. They drove him away from the dock and into the night.

"Brian!"

He heard Mack leaping off the dock behind him, running. But he couldn't go back. If he went back to that job he knew his kids would be there out in the darkness every night crying again, not really wanting him exactly, just letting him know how lost and hurting they were. And every time that happened he would lose still more of his flesh to the hooks.

"Hey, Brian. Why you walking so funny?" Mack said beside him.

"Got a little pain, that's all. Guess I pulled something." Another hook hit him behind his left ear, tore down through his scalp and twisted, embedded itself in his ear lobe.

"Hey, I know something'll fix that right up. You need a drink, my man."

The hooks moved through his muscle in a jagged dance. Now and then they could hit a nerve and the dance grew electric. Maybe he *could* use a drink.

"What about Belkins? He'll fire you, too."

"Screw 'im. I was gonna quit anyway. I got better



STEVE RASNIC TEM, recent World Fantasy Award winner for his story *Leaks*, is a resident of Denver, Colorado, USA. He is renowned for his prolific fiction output which includes more than 100 shorts and two novels, entitled *Excavations* and *New Blood*. His latest story, *Hooks*, shows that he can mix physical and emotional horrors like few other writers in the fantasy/horror genres. So, unsettle yourself and get ready to kick '89 into touch.

"A dozen or so hooks were on him in an instant—small ones, like stinging, biting insects"

hooks hooked the air, trawled through deep pools of night, fished along eddies and tides of city street wind.

And Brian had always been one of the grandest fish, one of the plumpest prizes the hooks could find. He didn't know why. He just knew. Ever since he'd first realised those hooks were there, they'd been able to find him; and did. Once they got you broken in,

"The hook had wiggled, tearing up the soft inner tissue of the brain"

things to do. Like going drinking with my baddies."

Brian felt sorry for him: there was such desperation in the man. "Then let's do some serious drinking," he said.

Brian chose a dark bar. He knew where to find all the darkest bars. But even after eight or nine drinks the hooks inside him were sharp and active.

"Be a man," Mack was saying, his eyes getting slightly greenish the more he drank. "My daddy always said that was the best way to handle a wife and kids. You gotta take 'em or leave 'em on your terms, not theirs. That way they won't get to you so bad."

Brian threw back another drink, almost choking on it. He'd felt a sudden, lingering tear in his side, as if a foreign object incredibly slick and unbelievably cold had just been slipped through the epidermis, through layers of muscle – quickly, as if with no resistance – right into the vacancies inside him, filling them with pain. He bit into his lip trying to hold back the tears, feeling helpless, unable to drink any more, the hope dribbling out of him as if his body were some nasty, leaking sack.

"You let yourself care too much, you just make it harder on yourself," Mack said, crouching over his empty glass as if searching for more liquor.

"When's the last time you saw your family, Mack?" Brian felt cruel asking it – Mack had never mentioned having a family before – but at the moment Brian didn't really mind being a little cruel.

Mack jumped a little. As if he'd just been landed, Brian thought. As if he'd just been hooked. "Four years," Mack said quietly between gritted teeth. There was an ever-so-slight grimace on Mack's face, well-contained, as if he were almost used to it by now, as if it were some routine unpleasantness, like heartburn. Mack stood abruptly, weaving. "Nothin' bottle," he said, and staggered off toward the bar.

Be a man. Brian's daddy used to say that all the time. Brian had grown up along the riverbank and his daddy, trying to raise the boy by himself, would take him fishing every summer when he wasn't working, which was most of the time. Brian's dad made him collect the fish hooks the other fishermen had lost along the bank. "Save us some money, boy."

But the hooks would catch Brian's skin, the barbs would snag and then his daddy would yank them out with a pair of rusted pliers.

"Daddeeeeee!" The pain seemed so much larger than himself. Brian had always imagined it must be an adult's pain it was so big.

"Be a man, son. Be a man. don't care about it, and it won't matter."

His daddy would drink more and more as the summer wore on. Finally Brian learned he could put all the old rusted hooks in a jar he hid inside his shirt and tell his daddy he couldn't find any more, and his daddy would be too drunk to care.

At the end of the summer he'd bury all the jars, dozens of them, and then he'd stop caring about them.

Mack brought back one bottle after another from the bar. He drank until the muscles in his belly and back stopped their visible jumping and he didn't look like a hooked fish anymore. Just a dead fish. "So how long's it been since you seen your wife and kids?"

Brian thought he detected a smile on Mack's drunken lips. "Eight years," he replied.

"Welcome to the club," Mack managed to say, and passed out.

"Thank you," Brian reached for the remaining half-empty bottle. The hooks inside him began their soft singing. Brian thought to drown out the sound. One might think he hated the hooks. But he didn't, they'd been around so long, it was hard to imagine his life without them.

"I just don't love you anymore, that's all. I'm not sure I ever did." Eight years ago, and Brian could still see his wife's face, and the way she'd said each word. He had seen that final speech coming for a long time.

Once she'd started, she'd kept going as if she couldn't stop talking. He had just stared at her with that hook in the back of his brain. He had felt it: hard so very long he had thought it must end somewhere just back of his eyeballs. The hook had found him when she'd first said she was leaving him – it had gone in so quickly it hadn't even hurt at first. But she had kept on talking, even as he silently begged her to stop, and the hook had wiggled, tearing up the soft inner tissue of the brain, and began to yank up and down as if whatever had hooked him wanted to pull him up through the ceiling. Then the pain had intensified: closing his eyes he had seen the silver flames dancing on his nerve-ends.

"This is my home," he'd finally managed between clenched teeth. "Those are my kids. What am I supposed to do?"

Darla had given him one of her *oh you poor bastard* looks, but she would never indulge in the faintest hint of profanity. "I'm not asking for your money, you know. You can keep your money, what there is of it. The kids and me will move in with the folks. Dad'll love to have me back."

"This is my family! I said what am I supposed to do?" He'd known it would sound stupid to her – pitifully weak. Maybe it was. He could feel the strain in his neck muscles as the hook lifted up on his hamburger brain.

"The kids listen to me, remember? They don't listen to you. They've never respected you. Things get a little sticky with them and you get one of your famous headaches. It's always been that way." Darla had turned her back on him and continued packing the suitcase. For just a moment he'd thought of ripping that hook out of his brain – maybe tearing out a piece of the brain with it, it didn't matter – and slapping it right through her chest. It was the first time he'd ever thought of hitting her and the image made him shudder.

"I love the kids," he'd said quietly.

Darla had turned then, and for the first time that evening looked a little sad. "I know you do. And maybe they love you too. Some. I just don't know anymore, Brian. I honestly don't." Then she'd returned to her packing.

He hadn't actually seen the hook, just felt it, felt the shape of it in his head. Even before then he'd felt some of the effects of those hidden, serenading hooks. Even before then there'd be nights, when maybe something had happened to clue him in that the marriage was bound to end. Something that let him know that his children were *hers*, and always would be.

Eight years ago, the day after his wife and kids had cleared out of the house, he'd spent most of the hours pacing the empty rooms, studying them, going through the closet where Jackie had kept her collection of stuffed animals, finding the stack of crayon-decorated "Adoption Certificates" she'd made up for each one, handling each piece of construction paper as if it were some rare and fragile print.

About midday, after he'd found one of Will's tiny toy cars and a bottle of Darla's favourite perfume to add to the collection spreading across the kitchen table, it had started to rain. He'd heard it starting slowly, a soft tapping at the roof and windows requesting entrance. But he'd been too busy with his own thoughts to notice much – too busy trying to shield himself from the pain and yet still think about them.

When the rain's strength and clamour had increased significantly he had turned to look out the kitchen windows. Silver streaks had beaten on the glass, but without leaving moisture trails.

He'd gone up to the window. Tiny metal hooks had thrown themselves at the pane.

He'd retreated to the centre of the kitchen and listened to the assault against his home. The sound of

the thousands upon thousands of tiny hits had seemed metallic. He'd walked slowly to his front door. Above the mat, where the door bottom didn't quite reach the threshold, hundreds of tiny hooks had been pulling themselves through like one-legged insects. Brian had run to the coat closet for a pile of coats to throw over the advancing hooks. The hooks and coats wedged tightly against the door, stopping the flood.

After a few minutes the rain of hooks had increased to an ear-shattering roar. Brian collapsed to the floor. He'd pressed the heels of his hands against his ears to keep out the sound. Once he began screaming, the metallic rain had abruptly stopped.

That was the first time that Brian had recognised the hooks for what they were.

Brian left Mack behind at the bar. His head spun, but he couldn't hear the hooks singing to him. He was climbing the stairs up from the subway, thinking again about that first time, when the memory guided one of the hooks to him again.

He could feel it coming. A distant singing, followed by a slight change in temperature, then a sudden change in air pressure. Sometimes, if the hook was big enough, his ears would pop. Sometimes it just felt like the beginnings of a headache. What happened to his back wasn't exactly painful. The hooks seldom caused any pain as they entered you. It was *inside* that they did their damage. Inside, the hooks found themselves a stream to work in. Then they went with that stream wherever it took them. No doubt some of the same streams of pain and fear that ran sharp and cold through his flesh had flooded the Neanderthals as well, and made them killers. Had told them when to run.

The hook that had entered Brian's back was drawn smoothly into his streams of pain. Soon he could feel it snagging on a lung, looking for food. He began to run, looking for some dark doorway to hide in, or at least to hide his pain from whoever might be watching. He thought about getting a hotel room somewhere and hiding under half-washed linen, but he knew the hooks would find him anyway. Besides, he had only a few dollars left from his job at the loading dock. He and Mack had drunk up all his room money.

And now once again his friends the hooks were back. The hook that entered his back tore its way up through his throat and out of his mouth. He tried not to cry out, but when a hook departed that way – tearing out through your mouth, stretching it until it cracked and bled – it hooked on your vocal chords as well, and then to whatever part of your brain it was that sent up the anguish flags. And you couldn't help but let the sound go. A long, low cry like a partly anaesthetised cat slowly being torn apart.

Daddy . . . The voice was so soft, Brian didn't know if it was Jackie or Will. He didn't want to know. Brian listened to the dark night air.

Daddeeee . . . A hook sang past his ear.

Brian stumbled into an alley, tiny hooks just catching the top layer of skin on his exposed hands, his bare ankles. Now and then he'd feel a brief snag on his face. Sweat, or blood, trickled down inside his clothes, making them stick to his flesh. Even as he ran he grabbed at his shirt and tried to pull it away from his body, trying to get some cloth and air between him and the hooks. Every place the cloth adhered the hooks seemed to target, driving through the cloth directly into the skin.

Brian dove into a pile of garbage that filled one corner of the alley. He dug furiously, throwing rotted tomatoes and banana peels and sour mush back at the hooks which now filled the night air like rain, shimmering silver under the bright mercury street lamps. He buried himself until he could feel at least a foot of damp, foul trash between him and the air above. The hooks rained on the mess above him for a few seconds more and then stopped. After several minutes he fell

into an exhausted sleep.

In his sleep he thought he could hear his children singing, but he had only two children, and yet there were so many voices. He could see a multitude of mouths swimming through the dark air, mouths singing with passion and pain, black fish with their silver-bright mouths swimming frantically, singing, trying desperately to evade the hooks.

When he woke up he'd forgotten where he was. Rough paper had dried against his face, and there was a vaguely familiar stench. He wondered what hotel he'd stumbled into last night. He had a hazy memory of a room so bad he'd had to vomit out his disgust before he could fall asleep.

He stirred and pulled himself up, scraping a dried scum away from his face and neck. He thought the smell might be rotting fish. He opened his eyes and found himself chest-high in garbage. He pushed and kicked it away from him, getting his fingers slimy in the process. He rubbed at his eyes with the relatively clean part of his shirt. In the dim light dark shadows travelled his way.

"There's no need to do this alone, you know," came a gravelled voice out of the darkness.

Brian stood and looked around for an escape.

"Ours is a select club," came another voice; softer, but as tired as the first. "But we grow and grow. All the time."

The first figure shambled out of the darkness. The man was naked except for an old pair of shorts. Tiny silver things moved in and out of his flesh, several to the square inch, covering his skin with a constant activity. As the man came closer Brian could see that the tiny things were hooks, flexible metal hooks that moved and twisted like thin silver worms, darting in and out of his skin like needles sewing, like worms feeding. They covered his cheeks, his eyelids, his lips, his arms, his hands, his legs. A constant frenzy, singing out now and then with the accidental contact of the metal.

"I miss my children." It seemed to be all Brian could say.

"Then sh-you sh-should have done s-something," another figure said, but the words were slurred. Then the fellow's red face loomed out of the shadows, his tongue protruding, dozens of hooks embedded there, trapped, writhing.

"But that matters little now," said another figure. Bare from the waist up, the man's skin seemed to be moving, stretching. Brian stared at the chest as the hooks inside stretched against the skin as if attempting escape, zigzagging down the chest, occasionally poking through to form a thin trail of blood, cutting out smiles and gills as they moved back and forth, travelling all the way down to the man's belly button.

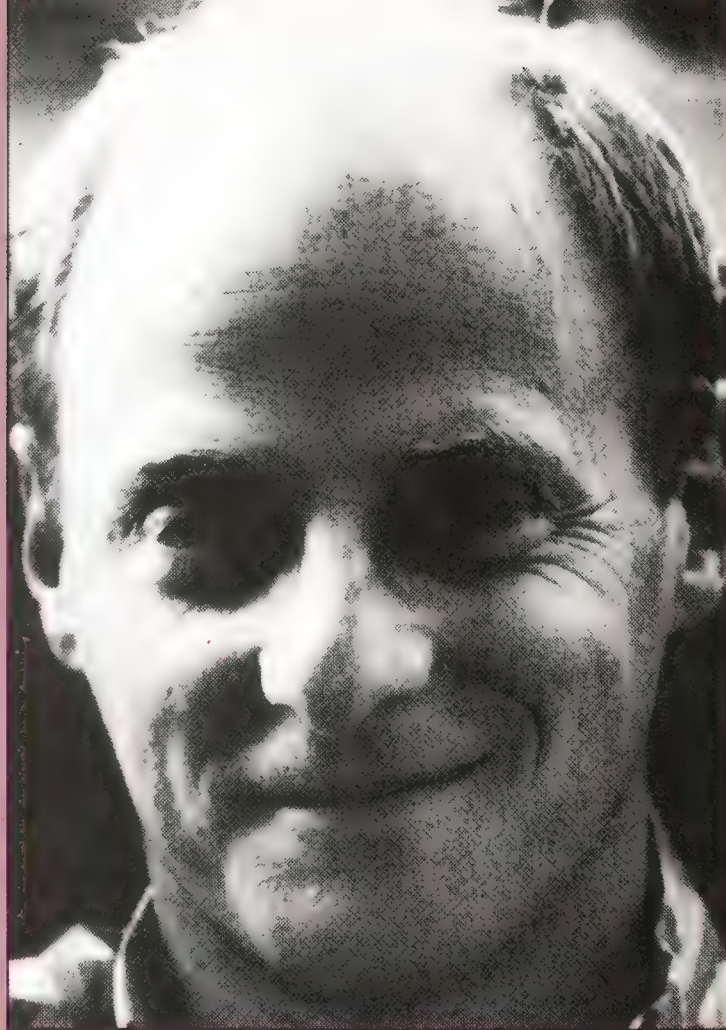
"Join us," another said.

And still another, "There really is little choice at this point."

Brian made just a nod, the slightest, virtually involuntary descent of a head too weary to do anything else. He could feel the tiny pricks, and his skin beginning to distort, his features stretching in impossible ways. So he threw his arms out for an embrace, singing his children's names, as the hooks came and came and came.

"As the man came closer Brian could see that the tiny things were hooks, flexible metal hooks that moved and twisted like thin silver worms"

"Vienna is a place where I don't worry about my wife walking the dog at night, and my son can walk to school. I think that's the way we should live, and I don't believe America has that any more"



MOON CHILD

Jonathan Carroll's new novel, *Bones of the Moon*, is a dark, disturbing, and utterly brilliant work of fiction. It is a story of a man who is haunted by a dark, mysterious past, and who is forced to confront it in a way that is both terrifying and beautiful. The novel is a masterpiece of modern horror, and it is a must-read for anyone who loves a good story.

J

onathan Carroll has not exactly burst onto the horror/fantasy literary scene. His 1980 novel *The Land of Laughs*, an intoxicating blend of 20th century Americana and

evil at its most pure, was a staggering debut. But despite the recent Arrow edition of the book (it originally appeared under the Hamlyn imprint) – featuring the now almost obligatory thumbs up from Bangor's finest, who chirped

'I can't remember when I've been so blown away by a fantasy novel' – it did not make the author an overnight success.

Undaunted, Carroll persevered and, in 1983, unleashed *Voice of our Shadow*, possibly the most paranoia-inducing read of the last 20 years. Still nothing.

Indeed, it was not until the publication of Carroll's pièce de résistance, *Bones of the Moon*, in 1987 that people sleepily began to take notice. *Bones* was a magnificent achievement and an undoubtedly blurry-eyed Stephen King was again quick to throw his

not inconsiderable weight behind it.

'I'll always be indebted to that man,' Carroll confides to me over toasted sandwiches and salad. We're in the Piccadilly Hotel a few days before the rigours of the 1988 World Fantasy Convention – the first in the UK. Hours of book signings are ahead and the presentation of the coveted short story award, for the almost subliminal F&SF masterpiece *Friend's Best Man*, is still undreamed of.

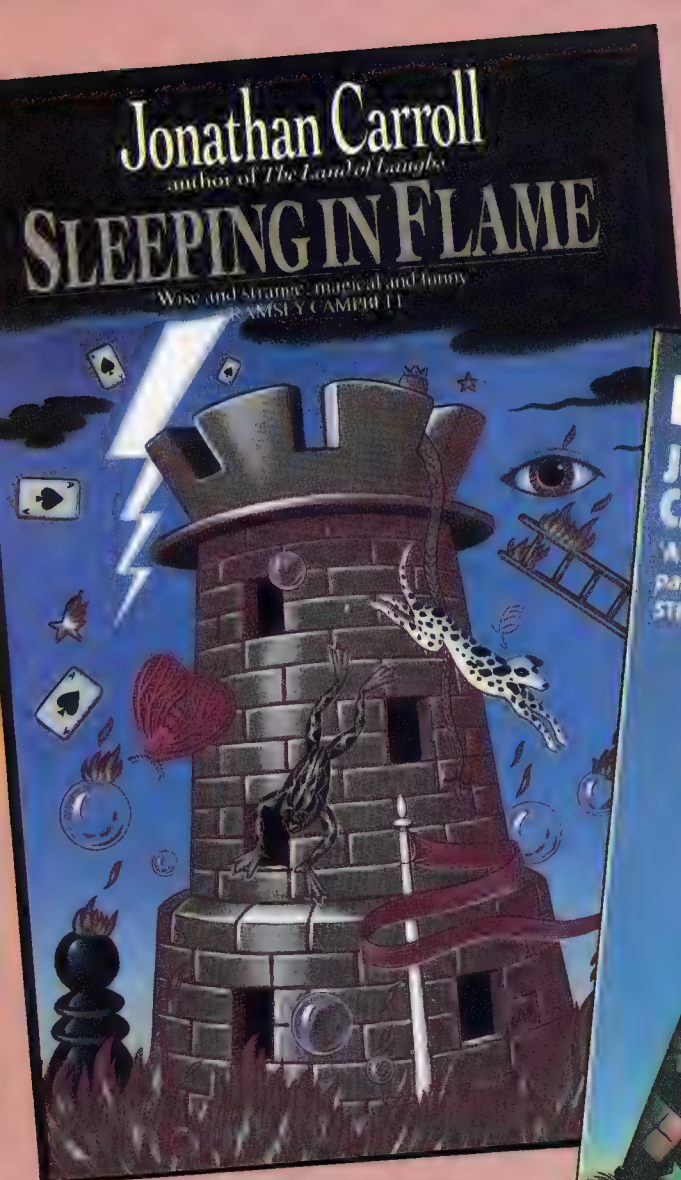
'I remember it so well,' Jonathan continues, in a precise and deep American accent, which has survived surprisingly well considering his 15-year-long residence in Vienna. 'I'd had a very bad day and we were living in a very dark apartment – it was the middle of winter. I had a look in the mail box and there was this letter from Bangor, Maine . . . from someone called S. King! I opened it up and there was a three-page letter and the first line was 'Dear Mr Carroll, you don't know who the fuck I am, but I know who you are!' He leans closer across the table: 'Son of a bitch . . . Stephen King wrote me a fan letter!'

It turned out that King had heard about *Land of Laughs* – it had actually been published by his own publisher – but he hadn't read it until, some two years or so later, he picked it up in an airport. 'What a man! I mean, Stephen King! He writes me a three-page single-spaced letter saying 'You're the cat's miaow, and if I can do anything for you let me know.' That's a big heart.' He pushes a piece of salad around his plate, and muses: 'A really big heart. If we could all be so kind at that level of fame, then we'd all be a lot better, you know.'

GENIAL GENIUS

Fame is coming for Carroll too now. It's coming slow, but it's coming, though he shows no sign of knuckling under to the stardom machine. In fact, his talk with me is his only interview while he's over here and it's the first one he's done for several years. 'It bothers me doing interviews generally,' he says when I ask about his seeming reluctance to adopt a public face. 'I did journalism years ago and I did some interviews, and I realised that I was in a position a lot of the time to cut and edit whatever was said and make that person look whatever way I wanted him to look.'

'And, sure enough, I gave a couple of interviews myself – where I was the one being interviewed – and they were so distorted. I was trying to be open and friendly and . . . this one guy



"Son of a bitch . . . Stephen King wrote me a fan letter!"

— I don't think he liked my stuff very much — made it sound like I was in it for the money or something.' He shakes his head and takes a sip of Perrier. 'Let's face it: no writer is in it for the money!'

In terms of appearance, Carroll is not the archetypal writer. He looks like a cross between a young Olivier and a boot-camp marine, complete with close-cropped haircut, and a six-two or six-three frame held upright by feet that would put Herman Munster to shame, clad, as they are, in heavy duty black shoes which Karloff might have worn in the old Frankenstein movies. ('I take these shoes with me everywhere I go,' he tells me later as we leave the restaurant, to the accompaniment of crockery rattling in time with his footsteps.)

But there's an inherent gentility about Jonathan Carroll, both in his eyes and his mannerisms. And it's a gentility that may well have been instrumental in his decision to leave the United States for fields anew. 'I feel very uncomfortable living in America now. And when I go back I just feel more and more this need to get out again. 'Vienna is the last Thirties city in Europe. The thing I like about it is that it's genteel . . . that's the right word: genteel. You know, they use cream in the coffee and you can go

for a walk.' He pauses. 'Someone asked me recently why I live there specifically and not London or someplace. And it struck me as a small but interesting thing: I walked out one day — I have an eight-year-old son — and saw kids walking to school. I mean, in America you just don't let your kids do that. Period. Vienna is a place where I don't worry about my wife walking the dog at night, and my son can walk to school. I think that's the way we should live, and I don't believe America has that anymore.'

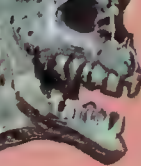
Carroll left America 15 years ago when he finished graduate school. He was teaching at the time — World Literature — and was offered jobs in Tehran, Beirut and Vienna. 'Thank God we took Vienna,' he says emphatically. 'I don't even know if we'd have stayed in Europe if we'd gone to one of those other places. The experiences of some people I know caused them to run . . . that can sour the whole thing, and in those situations you just want to go back home. But for

us, we've gotten to like it more and more.'

BEYOND DESCRIPTION

The son of an actress mother and a screenwriter father — Sidney Carroll wrote *The Hustler*, among other things, and had two stories published in Ray Bradbury's influential 1952 anthology *Timeless Stories for Today and Tomorrow* — it was perhaps inevitable that Jonathan would turn to writing, though there were times in the early days when things could have turned out very differently. 'I was brought up in a town of lugs,' he confides, an almost proud gleam betraying the otherwise disparaging description, 'the kids there didn't wear leather jackets, they were just baaaaad!' He delivers this last word like Gene Wilder in *Stir Crazy*. 'I even had a zip gun. Those were interesting times, though.'

The times and the personalities



resurfaced, albeit briefly, in the early pages of Carroll's second novel, *Voice of our Shadow*, almost as a homage to those early days. But even then, Carroll wanted to write. 'Oh, I've wanted to write since I was about 17 or 18, and like every writer – successful or failed – I started copying all my heroes and getting eight million rejection slips in the process.'

'I'm not saying anything new here, but I think that a writer only becomes a writer when he finds his own voice. The interesting thing about my books is that nobody knows what to do with them. In America, *Bones of the Moon* was put out strictly as a fantasy, and that's not right, because it's not strictly a fantasy. *Land of Laughs*, when it came out, became invisible immediately because it was published by Viking as a serious literary novel. It disappeared. And that's the thing, you know. My books either go or they don't go purely on the basis of their eccentricity.'

'Some fans come up to me and say 'I don't like your books because they're not fantasy...' or 'I'm a fantasy reader and if only you'd gone foot-to-the-floor weirdo way out...' Example: a lot of fantasy readers like *Bones* the most because it's got that lulu land in it, whereas things like *Voice of our Shadow* they just throw across the room!'

Land of Laughs was not Carroll's first book. There were two others which are now 'sitting mouldering in the drawer someplace and probably always will'. But Carroll believes that everyone has their own false starts. 'Writing is like sharpening a knife, you know,' he explains. 'A good analogy is the inmates in those old prison movies: they take a seemingly innocuous object, like a spoon, back to their cell and they sharpen it on the floor for months, using only a little spit... and, if they're any good, the spoon becomes a knife. All it takes is patience. And anybody who writes seriously, whether it's as a journalist or as a novelist, wants their spoon to be very sharp... and, every once in a while, the spoon turns into a knife.'

BRIDGE OF DREAMS

Like any kind of art, writing, according to Jonathan, is the result of neurosis. 'I don't think it's the result of peaceful home life in a comfortable living room of the mind. You want to be published... to be recognised... and you want people to say 'This guy's different!' But, in fact, when you're starting out you're not different: you're copying Salinger or King or whoever. You change as you go on.'

So what does Jonathan think of

his early work now? He sits back and thinks before answering: '*Land of Laughs*, which I think is very far away from me now, is like... well, let me put it this way: Hemingway, in his *Islands in the Stream*, had the main character's oldest child say something like 'I know that you didn't love me best, you loved my brothers.' And the protagonist says, 'Yes, but I've loved you the longest.' In many ways that's the way I feel about *The Land of Laughs*: I don't love it the best, but I have loved it the longest.'

The thing that seems to link all of Carroll's books is the apparent power we possess to create things and situations out of our own minds. In *Laughs*, the characters from the children's books written by Marshall France live on long after his death, waiting for the hapless Thomas Abbey, in the guise of France's biographer, to extend their hitherto tenuous existence; *Voice of our Shadow* has Joe Lennox's dead brother exert a considerable influence from beyond the grave, in the form of a gradual but comprehensively destructive revenge; through her dreams, Cullen James bridges worlds and lives in the stunningly allegorical *Bones of the Moon*; and, in *Sleeping in Flame*, Carroll's latest published work, Walker Easterling literally fights for his soul against – and with help from – the might of the personified literary creations of the Brothers Grimm. Is this what motivates Carroll then... this question of what is real and what isn't?

With a tight-lipped smile, Carroll considers the question. 'Nobody really knows what they're capable of,' he answers at last, 'and I don't mean that in terms of some screwball hacking up a woman someplace. I mean... the dumbest example is that of a woman whose child gets run over by a car; the woman goes over and picks up the car so that the kid can get out.'

'And they can explain that all day long as being adrenalin or psychic phenomena or whatever. Basically, what it boils down to is the fact that we are capable of things that defy our understanding of our accepted range of capabilities. There's an occult philosopher named George Gurdjieff who says there are three levels of consciousness. There's sleeping; there's sleeping wakefulness; and there's awareness.'

'Sleep is sleep... sleeping wakefulness is you walk around... He points at me suddenly. 'You don't even realise that you're licking your lips now, for example. That's sleeping wakefulness. And awareness is like on the level of Jesus or... or somebody like that. For most of us, those moments of true awareness are very rare... like right before you

get married, when you're waiting to say 'I do'... or the few minutes before you die. And I think that, at those times, you're as capable of lifting the car as the woman trying to save her child. In my books, I'm constantly going back to this thing that we can or can't do.'

SKY GAZING

'For me, as a writer, I always find it astonishing that I can sit down literally not knowing what's coming next. Some days I just feel that I'm not capable of writing another page... then I sit down and one of my characters opens the door and there's something there. I don't know where it comes from and I'm not talking about inspiration. It just comes. Where does that woman's strength come from? It just comes. It has to be a process of learning, of growing awareness. We do get paranoid – and that's a very good word for it – because it scares us when it comes.'

Opening a door and finding something unusual – such as a dreaming dog talking in its sleep – is fast becoming a classic Carroll device, though sometimes the unexpected visit can have serious implications. In the final few paragraphs of *Sleeping in Flame*, for example, when the book is more or less complete, Walker Easterling answers the doorbell and...

He laughs. 'A very good friend of mine tells me constantly that there are no happy endings in my books. Well, I don't do that purposely. I don't say 'Okay, now we've got it coming'. It's just the fact that if you're going to doodle around with fairytale creatures then you should realise that there's a whole family of fairytale creatures. You know, they're out there and they're not going to keep their fingers stuck in their ears!'

'Someone else who read the manuscript said to me 'Well, what happened?' And I said 'I don't know'. And that's true. All I do know is that I think they're okay, because in my next book, *A Child Across the Sky*, someone goes to visit them three years later in Vienna and they seem to be okay,' Carroll shakes his head almost apologetically, as if he's not responsible for his characters in any way. 'I'm not being coy,' he adds when I challenge him. 'I just didn't think about it. But they're alright.' And then, with a hint of a grin and a sparkle in his eyes, 'But that doesn't mean they'll stay alright.'

"We are capable of things that defy our understanding of our accepted range of capabilities"



Next Issue: *A Child Across the Sky*, canine success, and invisible smells.

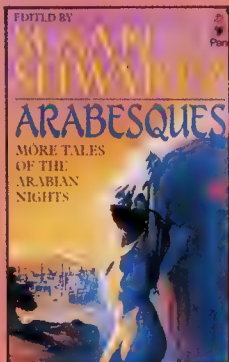
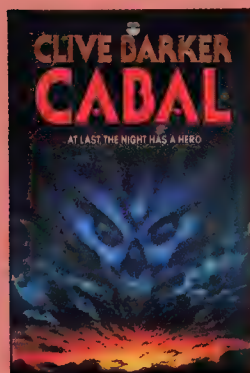
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AN AUDIENCE WITH FREDDY KRUEGER

The horror cinema of the Eighties has yielded few more memorable menaces than Freddy Krueger, the bastard son of a hundred maniacs who hasn't let his cooked hamburger complexion, major manicure problem, and revolting taste in striped sweaters hold him back from movie fame.

An old-fashioned showman, he's not even averse to putting his own fraises out on camera just for the sake of a cheek laugh. And now it's little surprise that our hero has been signed up for his own TV show, **FREDDY'S NIGHTMARES**, which means we'll soon be able to see the demon's favourite child mobster introducing a series of **TWILIGHT ZONE**-type terror tales from The Hall of Dreams.

So, let's take a beat out of our love head's brood with a lengthy look at his past, present and potential misdeeds. And where better to start than



Recently over in London to talk about *Elm Street*, as well as his long-awaited directorial debut, *976-Evil* (Medusa), Freddy considerably slipped out of his gore gear, so as not

to alarm the other guests at London's Ramada Hotel, and became plain Robert Englund, a lanky, southerner relaxing in a check cowboy shirt and sipping Bushmills. The face was still familiar though, as the friendly alien who helped save the Earth from the lizard creatures of *V*, and further back as the punk who plugged Burt Reynolds at the climax of *Hustle* (1975).

Offering me a hearty handshake, Englund immediately asked if I'd seen *976-Evil* yet. The answer was 'er... yes.' What did I think of it? The answer was 'er... not bad... but a bit confusing in places.' He nodded in agreement. 'I think we turned in a really good little 110-minute movie' he shrugged. 'But there's a problem in Hollywood where producers think that every film has to be 90 minutes long. I was more than willing to cut it down to that length, but in the end they took it away and shortened it themselves in a way that I did not approve of, taking out whole scenes that were really very good and necessary to both the plot and the rhythm of the piece.'

The film is nevertheless a pretty chilling yarn about a nerdish 15-year-old mama's boy named Hoax (Stephen Geoffreys - better known as Evil Ed in Tom Holland's *Fright Night*) - who discovers that by

dialling the title number he can get straight through to the devil, and thus arrange to have a bunch of school bullies duffed up in a nasty supernatural fashion.

Unfortunately he's transformed into a slobbering demon as the price he pays for peace and quiet in the classroom, and is eventually sent to a place where you can toast bread on pitchforks.

Englund says his inspiration for the movie was the famous 1941 fantasy *The Devil and Daniel Webster*: 'My goal was to make a classic horror story, threaded through with a lot of humour. I wanted it to be like an allegorical fable about evil manifesting itself.' And manifest itself it certainly does, in a series of grisly sequences staged by 25-year-old makeup wizard Kevin Yagher: one unfortunate victim of Hoax's vengeance gets chewed to pieces by rabid pussycats and another opens her take-home pizza to find a swarm of tarantulas waiting to make a meal of her! There are also assorted impalements and beheadings, and as a grand finale we're treated to the sight of freshly torn out hearts still pumping away in Hoax's now-taloned hands.

DEAD AND BURIED

The movie business has been pretty good to Englund. After 15 years of playing second string good old boys in forgettable pictures like *Buster and Billie* (1973), *Stay Hungry* (1976), and *The Great Smokey Roadblock* (1977), he has finally achieved star status with his chilling performance as Freddy The K, the manicurist's nightmare who haunts Elm Street. You can tell he likes the character - even if the long

hours spent in the makeup chair often get him down - and that he knows which side his bread is buttered. After all, he chose a genre movie as his directorial debut.

Before donning Freddy's fright mask, Englund briefly flirted with the horror genre in the early '80s, taking small roles in a low budget psycho-thriller called *The Fifth Floor* and Gary Sherman's cult gore hit *Dead and Buried*, where he played a zombie truck driver. 'The most fun I ever had' he reminisces, 'was on a science fiction film I did for Roger Corman called *Galaxy of Terror*. That film had everything: including a giant oversexed worm that raped Erin Moran from *Happy Days*! Ray Walston from *My Favourite Martian* was in it too, and Eddie Albert from *Green Acres*! What a cast, right? And I don't know if you realise this, but our art director on that was none other than James Cameron, who went on to make *Aliens* and *The Terminator*. I used to go in and steal drawings out of the trash because I loved his artwork so much.

It was his contribution that made the film look so good. I know that one of the spacecraft interior sets we had in that film was made out of nothing more than Whopper cartons - which are these vacuum burger boxes. Jim had simply opened them up, turned them upside down and stapled them onto the ceiling of the spaceship to give it a sort of contemporary space shuttle look - he'd hidden the lights behind the bottom of some milk crates. It all looked fabulous, especially considering how cheaply it had been constructed, and after we finished filming Corman rented it to a German

commercial team and in fact made enough money on one weekend to pay for the entire art budget of the movie.'

The actor took on the persona of Freddy Krueger for the first time in 1984, in Wes Craven's original *A Nightmare on Elm Street*. When asked why Craven cast such a pleasant fellow in the role of one of the screen's most evil characters, Krueger gives a grin and a modest shrug and says 'I don't really know. I guess I was just lucky. You'll have to talk to Wes about that one. But it didn't really matter what I was like in the flesh. Anybody would look frightening with that sort of makeup on.'

The look of Freddy was a joint decision by Englund, Craven and the original makeup man Dave Miller. 'At the start they wanted just half of Freddy's face destroyed, and then along came the New Line people who were financing the production and they decided on making the whole thing a real mess, exaggerating the wounds a bit. On Parts III and IV, Kevin Yagher came in and refined the make-up, making it less constricting for me to perform in.'

FREDDY'S FACELIFT

Englund says he is happy with the way the series has progressed, although he expresses some reservations about the script of Part II. 'I think we went wrong there, mainly in the sequence where Freddy materialised during the teen party. What happened was that we didn't trust Wes Craven's perimeters of the character and where his powers lay. You have to adhere to this mythology set down by Wes or the films don't work. But although we sort of overstepped the mark there, there's a certain kinkiness to the project that I kind of like. And strangely enough it's the most popular of the series in Europe - don't ask me why.'

The *Dream Warriors* put the series back on course, and the actor insists that Part IV is even better: 'It's fabulous. We only spent 5 million on it but it looks like a 30 million dollar movie. It's absolutely amazing in terms of the effects. There are at least three or four classic sequences in it. We had this tremendous director, Renny Harlin, who also made *Prison* and has just beat out Ridley Scott and Wolfgang Peterson and everyone else to do *Aliens 3* - that's how good *Nightmare IV* is! I'm real proud of the film: it's just this amazing rollercoaster ride from the moment it starts to the moment it ends.'

The film's astonishing \$50 million US success has ensured that *Elm Street V* is on the slab. 'There's no script yet, but there's some discussion that we will begin shooting in late April. The producer called my agent last week to warn him that this was going to happen.'

SICK JOKES

But doesn't he feel that there's something unwholesome in the public's love of a child molester? 'Not a bit' he smiles. 'You see, we don't want anybody to sympathise with Freddy.'

'Freddy stands for revenge pure and sweet, and I think a reason for the viewers relating to Freddy is simply that audiences anticipate how he's going to have his way with the various characters in each movie. You know that Freddy will exploit their tragic flaws, and as those tragic flaws are set up then the audience begins to anticipate how Freddy will do away with them. In *Nightmare IV* for instance, there's a character who's afraid of bugs, and the logical exploitation of that fear of course is for Freddy to turn her into a giant cockroach . . .'

Unfortunately, there's nothing as frightening in the television soap *Freddy's Nightmares*. 'There is some gore' says Englund 'but the show is obviously a lot milder than the movies, and more in the style of, say, *The Twilight Zone* or *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*. Each episode is like a wonderful sick joke. The basic idea is that the people in it are not all that sympathetic, they sort of deserve their comeuppance by Freddy, who takes part in a couple of the episodes and generally functions as a surrogate host, kind of like a sinister Rod Sterling who underlines the theme of each story.'

When he finishes filming the television series Englund plans to

take time off. 'I've got to take a vacation or I'll die. But sometime next year I'd like to direct again. I've got a Jack the Ripper-type detective story that I'd be happy to do. But on the other hand I might try a change of material and do something light and frothy in the theatre - I really don't know . . . I recently got married, and I'm ready to have a child in the next couple of years, which is another phase of my life that I now feel comfortable about.' He grins broadly. 'I don't know though: Do you think the world is ready for a little Freddy?'



'ONE, TWO, FREDDY'S COMING FOR YOU ...'

Plastic plotlines aside, the NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET movies have included some spectacular special effects show pieces and, as Philip Nutman discovers, have given the careers of some sparkling new talents a richly deserved boost

Welcome to Elm Street, Springfield, USA. Welcome to the world of special effects

Following the Nightmare movies is somewhat akin to charting the technical advances in special make-up effects that have occurred over the past decade. As MTV slickness has intruded into cinematic styles, changing the structure of film, undermining narrative values to the degree whereby the average scene appears to last barely a minute and drama has been replaced by show-and-tell surface tension, so too has the rollercoaster aspect of horror movies increased to the point where mood and atmosphere have been replaced by FX showcases. Sadly, the desire to visually startle has replaced old fashioned suspense as the preferred manner in which filmmakers move a story forward.

The first *Nightmare on Elm Street* movie was, however, not a particularly effects-laden package, utilising only basic prosthetics on Robert Englund, mechanical techniques and minimal opticals. Wes Craven tried to tell a tight story with a definite sense of character, one that worked in the main through its paranoia. If you couldn't be safe when you were asleep where could you? And in doing so, he took the dream logic of surrealism out of the abstract and into the usually reassuring realm of suburbia.

Make-up artist David Miller was the man responsible for the handsome visage of Freddy K. Miller had previously worked on such films as *Dreamscape*, Michael Jackson's *Thriller* video, and *Night*

of the Comet among others. Most of his work displays a strong sense of characterisation, which was one of the main reasons why he was picked to helm the latex effects on *Nightmare I*.

His only briefing from Wes Craven was to create a truly hideous face, all puss-filled and heavily scarred. And that's exactly what the director got.

Miller did two initial tests on Robert Englund, the first featured translucent skin which revealed the musculature beneath. Craven, however, was not satisfied with the design and asked Miller to take it a stage further, dispense with the skin overlay, and go deeper. To do this would have revealed the character's teeth, a situation not possible with an appliance placed on an actor unless the rest of the features are built up.

This would have meant Englund would be required to wear even more appliances or an animatronic – mechanical – head would have to be used for close ups, a factor not possible for budgetary considerations. Miller avoided the problem by modifying the first design to a degree with which Craven was happy. The resulting make-up application time took, depending on what was required, between two-and-a-half to six hours; Freddy was ready for action.

THE NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET: THE MOVIE

Freddy's Revenge took the original picture's basic effects content

girl is running down an alleyway pursued by a shadowy, surreal figure. It could be a bag man but something is not quite right. As the figure shambles

towards the girl his arms elongate to cartoon proportions.

He draws closer, then, incredibly, he is in front. As the girl crashes into him we glimpse his face for an instant – then he's gone, behind her once again.

Now we see him properly for the first time. Under the floppy hat is a burnt face, the skin scorched off to reveal the charred musculature beneath.

Freddy Krueger, son of a thousand maniacs, smiles his sick smile and the nightmare takes on a new intensity. 'Oh, God,' the girl cries.

'This is God,' the dream stalker replies as he flashes his blades, grins, then slices two of his fingers off.

THE NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET: THE MOVIE
Surviving body
breakout look
Two days to
film on a 1960
city bus
Craven's

several stages further by using more opticals, some well-crafted miniatures, and disturbing transformational sequences courtesy of Mark Shostrom. Here, the technical imagination punches up the less than satisfactory script by David Chaskin, encouraging the audience to expect the next showcase. However, the flimsy plot line – Freddy needs the body of Jessie (Mark Patton) to be the vehicle of his murderous desires – has its moments, two of which really stick out.

Who can forget the scene in which the supernatural serial killer confronts his would-be ally, uttering 'You've got the body, I've got the brains', as he rips away a section of his skull to reveal his putrifying brain, or the scene in which as Jessie tries to explain his predicament to his friend Grady (Robert Rusler of *The Vamp* fame), he suddenly sprouts blades and Krueger bursts forth from his body? The first effect was handled by Kevin Yagher, the artist who took over from David Miller as Freddy's make-up man, and the latter by Shostrom.

Yagher originally wanted to use an animatronic head for the skull opening scene. Again, the budget forbade this so it was back to good old prosthetics work. Assistant Earl Miller sculpted half a brain from which an appliance was made to be attached to Englund's skull cap, then a layer of fake flesh was laid over the organ.

This seemingly simple gag required four people to operate on camera. A bladder device was included under the brain with six tubes exiting at the back, concealed by the actor's neck appliance, through which blood was pumped to pulse through the cranial channels, producing a throbbing effect.

Shostrom's gruesome transformation sequence was arranged in several stages. The initial one, where Krueger's blades protrude through Jessie's fingers was quite straightforward, achieved by a cable-controlled arm. But once Jessie is up against the wall the fun and games really start.

The stomach-bursting body break out took two days to film on a specially constructed set. The wall against which the actor was placed had been cut away. What you actually see is the actor's head and upper chest while the rest of his body is concealed. The lower section of his torso is a fake body, the stomach covered by a material called Smoothon that has great stretching properties.

When the audience sees Freddy's face appear under the body's skin it is actually a life cast of Robert Englund. At one point the sequence was going to be shot in such a way as to show the actor struggling out of the teenager's guts, but this was never filmed because the schedule was changed.

The third part of the

transformation is shown from an above the head shot; Krueger enters the room, discarding Jessie's upper torso like an old coat, and moves in for the kill. Although it wasn't what he had designed, Shostrom was reportedly quite pleased with the result which flows freely through careful editing.

Those two scenes had

considerable punch, but the one that came as a big disappointment was Freddy's death, confronted by Lisa (Kim Myers), Jessie's girlfriend, the killer appears to melt for no real reason – unless, of course, it was all down to the power of love. The way it is in the film, Freddy just screams and the side of his face slips off as he oozes goo. So much for the big finale. As scripted and shot, however, the death scene was much longer and more detailed.

Kevin Yagher had a fully functioning, sophisticated animatronic head crafted by his team of assistants; the head moved, the jaw opened and closed so the mouth could convincingly scream, the eyes blinked, the eyebrows could be raised and lowered, and the tongue – which had already been elongated in an earlier scene handled by Shostrom – was meant to lash about as Freddy screeched his death song.

The effect called upon the operational talents of no less than seven technicians, and by all accounts was rather impressive. so what went wrong?

Director Jack Sholder (see last issue for interview) decided, according to Yagher in an interview that appeared in *America* at the time of the film's release, that a long effects scene disrupted the flow of the sequence, so his solution was to reduce it to around 15 seconds, continually cutting back and forth between the dummy of Krueger and actress Kim Myers.

That wasn't the only effect in the film to be lost through Sholder's

editorial whims. The elongated tongue fabricated by Shostrom for a scene where Jessie makes out with Lisa was heavily trimmed too, as were several puppet creatures designed and built by Rick Lazzarini which failed to make it into the final cut. One wonders why Sholder was so hard on these effects, all crafted by experienced talents, yet makes a big thing out of the totally stupid exploding budgie scene. Nevertheless, even if those effects had been more prominent in the picture it is doubtful they would have improved the story, which at best is very mediocre.





From the original *Elm Street* (above), Nancy (Heather Langenkamp) and Freddy seemingly locked in an acid house rave-up, and (below) a quick bath together to freshen up



ELM STREET'S GOREMASTERS

Surprisingly, despite its short comings, *Freddy's Revenge* grossed more at the box-office than the film that spawned it, consequently won a bigger budget for part III, *Dream Warriors*. It is here that effects really start to take over to the point where the story is almost redundant, though fortunately the story this time was much stronger and supported the wildly inventive technical magic. The other main strength the second sequel had over *Freddy's Revenge* was that its director, Chuck Russell (see interview in last issue) who later went on to helm the effects extravaganza remake of *The Blob*, knew exactly what he wanted.

Dreams Warriors again employed the talents of Kevin Yagher and Mark Shostrom, and helped push the young artists into the big time. Yagher, the youngest of the two, was aged only 21 when he started work on Hollywood fantasy films. Self-taught, Yagher moved to Los Angeles from his home in Ohio, where he had previously been making Hallowe'en masks with his brother, Jeff, the actor who appeared regularly in the television series *V*.

Once in Hollywood, Yagher rapidly secured work on several films, including *Dreamscape*, *The Last Starfighter*, *Cocoon*, *Friday the 13th: The Final Chapter*, and Tobe Hooper's remake of *Invaders from Mars*. It was while he was half way

through assisting Stan Winston on this project that New Line signed him up to work on *Freddy's Revenge* because David Miller was unavailable. The quality of his work, and his new, streamlined make-up for killer Krueger so impressed company boss Robert Shaye, Yagher was immediately signed for *Dream Warriors*.

In *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, Freddy's face is never seen very clearly as Wes Craven deliberately shot most of dream stalker's footage in a shadowy style. Yagher felt that what the audience did see of the serial killer was not quite right. Since Freddy is a burn victim, he believed David Miller's original make-up was too fleshy, that Krueger's face should look more ravaged, emphasising the bone structure. Compare the character's face from the two films and the difference is immediately apparent.

The third sequel, however, provided Yagher with some of his most challenging work, particularly the Freddy snake that tries to swallow Kirsten (Patricia Arquette). Other effects in his province include Krueger's chest full of screaming children, the television face when he emerges from the top of the set as he kills Jennifer (Penelope Sudrow), and the finger syringes that F-boy uses to despatch Taryn (Jennifer Rubin).

The Freddy snake was 12 feet long and five different versions were designed. The one that eats the girl was not fully mobile, the version that vomits was! To get the

ELM STREET'S GOREMASTERS

A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET

Make-up effects
David Miller
Assistant
Mark Wilson
Special mechanical effects
Jim Doyle
Special effects assistants
Lou Carucci
Larry Lapointe, Charles Belardinelli, Tassilo Baur, Peter Kelly, Christina Rideout, James Upham, Jim Runing

NIGHTMARE II: FREDDY'S REVENGE

Make-up effects
Kevin Yagher
Assistants
Earl Ellis, Wendy Cooke
Transformation effects
Mark Shostrom
John Blake Dutro, Bart Mixon, Gregor Punchartz, Anthony Showe
Puppet effects
Rick Lazzarini
Special mechanical effects
A & A Special FX Inc
Dick Albain, Ron Nary

NIGHTMARE III: DREAM WARRIORS

Freddy Effects
Kevin Yagher
Assistants
Jim Kagel, Mitch DeVane, Gino Crognale, Dave Kindlon, Brian Penikas, Steve James, Everett Burrell
Special make-up effects sequences
Mark Shostrom, Greg Cannon
Showstrom Crew
Robert Kurtzman, Bryant Tausek, John Blake Dutro, Jim McLoughlin, Cathy Carpenter
Cannon Crew
Larry Odien, Earl Ellis, John Vulich, Keith Edmier, Brent Baker
Special Mechanical effects
Image Engineering Inc
Peter Chesney
Special Visual Effects
Dreamquest Images
Hoyt Yeatman
Stop Motion effects
Doug Beswick

NIGHTMARE IV: THE DREAM MASTER

Freddy Effects
Kevin Yagher
Assistant
Howard Berger
Freddy's Death
Steve Johnson's XFX
Cockroach sequence
Screaming Mad George
Souls Sequence
Magical Media Images
John Beuchler
Additional make-up effects
R. Christopher Biggs
Special Mechanical effects
Dreamquest Images
Justin Klarenbeck, Mike Bigelow

creature to move the body was cable-controlled, while the head was operated by a hi-tech rempote control device, and Peter Chesney of Image Engineering provided the mechanics to give the beast its elevational qualities.

For the soul chest, Yagher cast a torso plate to attach to Robert Englund's body. The faces were then made of foam rubber and their movements produced by simple cable techniques. Although it wasn't a ground-breaking effect, the result was quite startling.

When not creating ghastly visions for the Nightmare movies, Yagher has provided effects for a number of other films. Examples of his work can be found in *Trick or Treat*, *Retribution*, *The Hidden* and the forthcoming fantasy *Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure*. In addition to becoming known as the man who helped Freddy, Yagher also designed the make-up worn by actor Ron Pearlman in the *Beauty and the Beast* television series.

Mark Shostrom's other credits include *From Beyond* and *Evil Dead II*, both of which followed on from his stint on *Freddy's Revenge*. Since his workload between the Freddy fests had been so demanding he decided to take things easier on the second sequel. Originally Chuck Russell wanted him to do the snake, but Shostrom declined. His responsibilities included Jennifer Sudrow's television death, Freddy's bloody invitation that appears on a victim's chest, Kirsten's mother's decapitation, and the burnt baby which appears in the opening dream sequence. This effect, however, suffered a similar fate to the elongated tongue from the previous picture.

The charred corpse of the little girl who lures Kirsten into the Elm Street house was not in the initial drafts of the script, but came out of a brainstorming session between Russell and Shostrom. The effects artist designed and sculpted a lifesized corpse, which was then fully mechanised by his chief assistant, Robert Kurtzman. Although the director approved the design and was highly excited by the creation's potential, he did not get to see the result until the day they were due to shoot it. Consequently, he deemed it too disturbing, too lifelike, and that he would get a bad reputation if it appeared in the movie.

Shostrom and Kurtzman's hard work was axed and Russell had a prop man construct an alternative in an hour, which is the corpse seen in the film, a result that disappointed Shostrom a great deal. 'We worked very hard to get it right,' he stressed during an interview shortly after the film was released. 'And it was a piece of work I'm particularly pleased with, so I wasn't at all happy with Chuck's decision.'

One effect that Shostrom was pleased with, however, was the television death scene. 'We could

have taken a lot of short cuts, but I insisted in going the full mile to make it as realistic as possible as nothing in that sequence is real, it was a total illusion,' he reveals.

While Yagher and his crew built the bio-mechanical television set and Freddy head, Shostrom and his team built the full-sized, fully articulated dummy of Penelope

Sudrow. 'I made sure the arms and legs were jointed, that the hair and flesh tones matched that of the actress, because although the audience only see the dummy for a few seconds everything is focused on the body as Freddy pulls it into the TV. For a scene with nothing real, I think it works extremely well.'

Though Shostrom was keen to work on the latest Nightmare movie, and was approached by New Line, other commitments prevented him doing so. The larger-budgeted *Dream Master* is, however, crammed full of effects, exceeding anything the series has previously attempted. Since it is yet to open in Britain it would be unfair to discuss them. Also, to do the volume of show-stopping sequences justice requires a separate article, for the film moves rapidly from one audience grabber to the next with little pause and employed the talent of four creative teams headed by Kevin Yagher, Steve Johnson, Screaming Mad George, and John Beuchler (a feature I'm sure you wouldn't want to miss, coming soon to a **FEAR** near you -Ed).

Aside from the fact the film is a technical tour de force, the main reason for such a line-up of talent was due to the accelerated production schedule. *Dream Master* began shooting in April 1988 and opened in the US in mid-August,

22 weeks after the first day of filming. Normally such an effects-heavy picture would have a far longer schedule, both for principal photography and post production but New Line were intent on catching the tail end of the highly lucrative summer holiday season. On both counts they pulled it off; *Dream Master* is the best Nightmare on Elm Street movie to date and it looks set to be the best box-office: at the beginning of this year the movie had grossed £50 million in America alone. See it and you'll understand why.

**NINE, TEN,
YOU'LL
NEVER SLEEP
AGAIN**



VESTRON A



presents

A Celebrity Screening

LAIR OF THE WHITE WORM

Starring

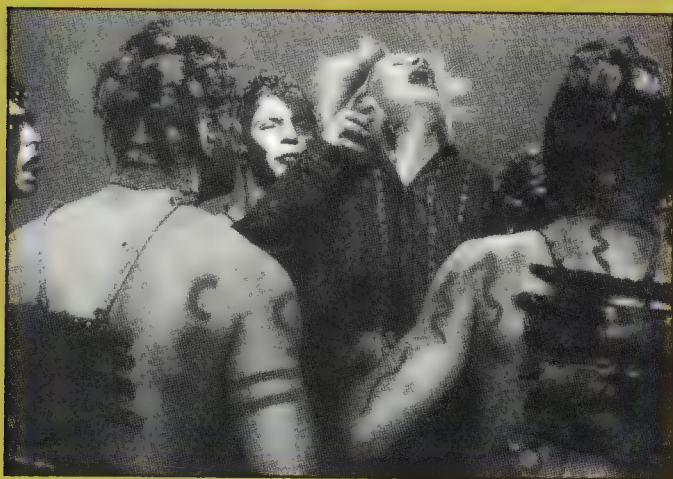
AMANDA DONOHOE • CATHERINE OXENBERG
• HUGH GRANT • SAMMIDAVIS •
STRATFORD JOHNS

FEAR

FEAR
BOX OFFICE

Following discussions between FEAR and the UK's leading movie distributors, we are able to offer a celebrity screening of a new film at one of London's West End cinemas specially for FEAR readers. We aim to make this a regular offer and eventually extend it to other main city centres around Britain.

Stars, directors and special effects people who worked on the movies will be there when possible to give you the lowdown on the making of. We'll also be offering light refreshments so you'll want to come along early.

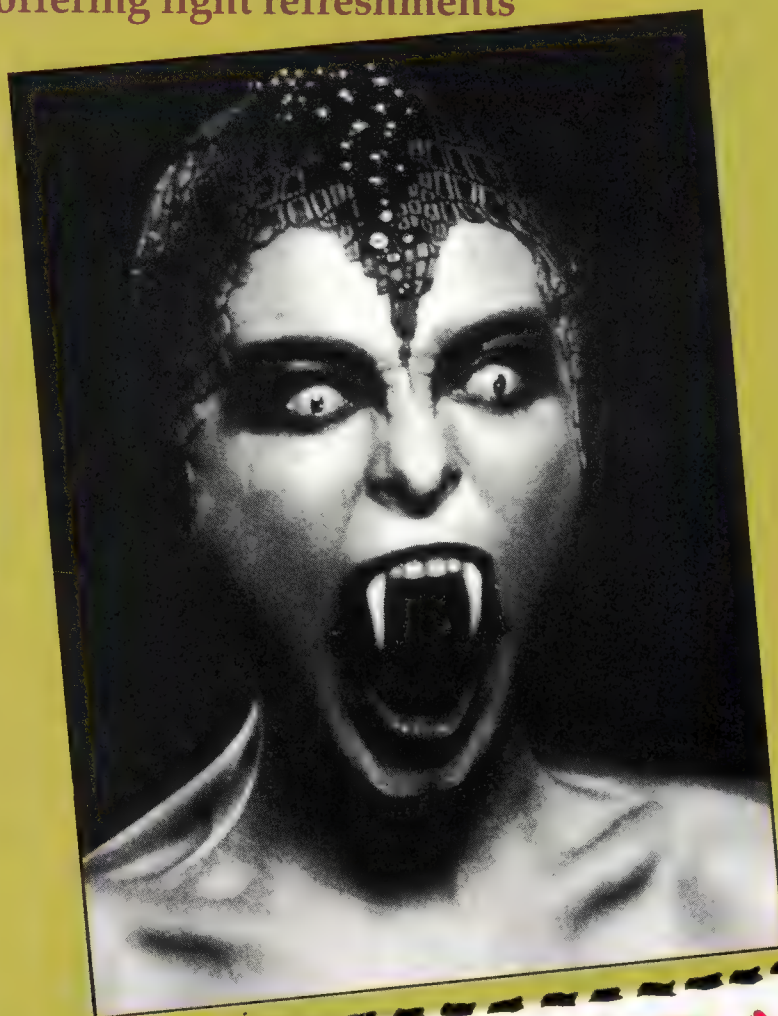


Ken Russell's controversial style of film-making is applied to a lesser-known tale from Dracula's creator Bram Stoker.

The beautiful Amanda Donohoe stars as the evilly seductive Lady Sylvia Marsh, a high priestess of an ancient snake-worshipping cult. Matched up against her is the handsome Lord d'Ampton, whose ancestor killed the infamous d'Ampton Worm, played by Hugh Grant, and his lovely girlfriend Eve Trent, played by Catherine Oxenberg.

Russell's visually compelling and hilariously scripted tale takes us through a series of humorously grisly events. You'll be instantly seduced, so come along to our screening on **Sunday April 16 1989** – the exact West End venue will be confirmed with ticket applications.

To obtain your tickets, simply complete the form below, indicating the quantity required, and return it with a cheque or postal order (each ticket costs £5.00) to **FEAR Box Office, Newsfield Ltd, Research House, Perivale, Middlesex, UB6 7AQ**. Applications must be received by March 20 1989.



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CRONENBERG IS NIGHTBREED!

John Glenday gives the latest news on Clive Barker's **NIGHTBREED**, the **BATMAN** movie, Spielberg's **PHANTOM OF THE OPERA**, **ROBOCOP II** and an investigative report on South African-made films.



lot of people thought that Frank Miller was a breath of fresh air to the Batman comic strip when he made the caped crusader a real meanie in the

Dark Knight Returns graphic novel. Well, now filmgoers are going to experience Miller's tough style first-hand as he's been hired to rewrite the script for *RoboCop II*, replacing Robo's creators Ed Neumeier and Mike Miner (see **FEAR Issue 3**).

Meanwhile the star of the first movie, Peter Weller, is working with *Driller Killer* director Abel Ferrara on *Cat Chaser* from an Elmore Leonard script. He has, however, agreed to do the sequel if the script matches his expectations.

Let's hope the script for *Class of 1999* – sequel to *Class of 1984* (what else?) – stands up to the promise of the original. It stars Malcolm McDowell under Mark Lester's capable direction. As it's set in the near future the movie's rather obvious twist is that all the school teachers are robots. I doubt that the standard of education is any better than before.

From modest budget to mega-money: and I can tell you that Indiana Jones's hat is kept in position on his well-proportioned brow by staples. All was revealed at a production preview of *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* which I guarantee will be one of the summer's blockbusters. Indy's out to rescue his dad Henry (Sean Connery no less) and find the Holy Grail. If that isn't enough he bumps into Adolf Hitler along the way. The film also stars young River Phoenix, who costarred with Harrison Ford in *Mosquito Coast*.

Having finished *The Last Crusade*, Steven Spielberg is to remake *A Guy Named Joe*, the 1944 Spencer Tracy movie about a dead pilot who returns to watch over his girlfriend's loveline. The ghostly aviator is

played by Richard Dreyfuss this time round, who's no stranger in the Spielberg stable. Spielberg has also promised Andrew Lloyd Webber that he will take on the musical *Phantom of the Opera*. Both men believe the screen version of the show will be a massive success, despite the fact that it's a musical – and they've seldom been wrong. But should Spielberg be wrong, he can always seek consolation in the production of *Paradox: Back to the Future II* which has Bob Zemeckis – Roger Rabbit's dad – at the helm.

OUT FOR LUNCH

David Cronenberg's twin careers as director and actor pick up a pace during the summer. As you've probably read on the news pages, he's been slated to play Doctor Decker in Clive Barker's fantasy/horror film *Nightbreed*. His directing role, which he's



David Cronenberg

likely to pick up after the acting job, couldn't be further away from monsters and ministrations to apparent homicidal maniacs; Cronenberg has just signed to direct *Naked Lunch*, a big-budget adaptation of William Burroughs's infamous novel. I would think that few people could get to grips with this incredible book but one of those would have to be the creator of *Dead Ringers*.

Let's travel to the other end of the movie market where several low-budget monster movies are nearing production. The bad news first. Jason Voorhees's latest adventure – that's the seventh – is to be released on video. Perhaps the mouldering hunk doesn't have the staying power in the UK but, if that's the case, why are production plays being drawn up for number eight?

Better news, as I can reveal, is that still lacking even a working title *Evil Dead III* goes into production during the summer. Parts of the film are likely to be shot in Hungary and messrs Campbell, Raimi, and Tapert are already involved. No joke intended but one suggested working title is *Medieval Dead*.

Talking of package deals, Wes Craven has a four-picture contract with Alive Films, who did a similar deal with director John Carpenter, and are raking in money from his latest movie *They Live*. Craven's first film will be *No More Mr Nice Guy* about a serial killer called Horace Pinkerton. If you think the idea of a serial killer is a little familiar then, yes, Wes sees Pinkerton as a challenger to Freddy Krueger's crown. The second movie also has a fantasy/horror theme. It's called *The People Under the Stairs* and sums up the content admirably.

Dino De Laurentis has also set up shop again, although he's supposedly a bankrupt. The director/producer has found a budget of £2.4 million for the Spanish-based production of *La Grieta* about a genetic experiment that goes wrong and mutates the environment.

Fred Olen Ray must have the market cornered on recent John Carradine footage. As you may know, the great genre actor died in November 1988 after a marvellous career spanning such movies as *The Boogeyman*, *The Sentinel* and *The Monster Club*. During 1985 Ray shot enough footage for Carradine to appear in three movies. *Star Slammer* and *Evil Spawn* have already been released but *The Coven* has yet to be launched from the grave.



Evil Spawn

OUT OF AFRICA

The question of apartheid has seeped through to the film world with the discovery that some movies have been made in South Africa despite a cultural boycott by many film companies. The films we were able to track down include:

Red Scorpion, starring Dolph Lundgren, directed by Joseph Zito

Committed, starring Jennifer O'Neill (*Scanners*) and Robert Forster, directed by William Levey

American Ninja, starring Michael Dudikoff. Now on video release

Rage to Kill, starring Oliver Reed

Alien from LA, directed by Albert Pyun (*Sword and Sorcerer*)

The Demon, starring Cameron Mitchell

Freedom Fighters, starring Peter Fonda (what would Jane say?) now out on video rental

White Ghost, starring Reb Brown

And Finally, nothing to do with South Africa, Jim Henson is working at Pinewood on a series of programmes for America's NBC Television. One episode is called *Monster Maker* about a kid who wants to meet the creator of his favourite creatures, a special effects guy played by Harry Dean Stanton. Other Henson titles include *Living with Dinosaurs*, *The Ghost of Eaffner Hall* and more of *The Storyteller*.

STOP PRESS: News of *Willow II* has just hit our fan!

**EXCLUSIVE
PREVIEW!**

MOVIE MAINLINE

THE ADVENTURES OF BARON MUNCHAUSEN

Starring: John Neville, Sally Polly, Jonathon Price, Eric Idle, Charles McKeown, Winston Davis, Jack Purvis, Oliver Reed, Uma Thurman. Producer/Director Terry Gilliam, Screenplay Terry Gilliam, Charles McKeown. Distributor RCA/Columbia. Cert PG

Somewhere between what is Real and what is Not lies Endless Possibility.'

However, it must have seemed to Terry Gilliam at one point that Possibility does have its limits. His long-cherished production of *The Adventures of Baron Munchausen*, based on the book by Rudolph Erich Raspe, was way over budget and behind schedule and, in November 1987, Gilliam was forced by Film Finance Inc (the LA-based insurance firm who put up the original £20.5 million for the movie) to go through his screenplay and do some serious cutting, either simplifying or removing scenes that were too expensive or complicated.

At an estimated budget of \$25 million, *Baron Munchausen* was one of the largest independent projects mounted, but now, with the film completed and already released in the Baron's home country of Germany, the final production cost of Gilliam's epic fantasy is \$52 million and worth every cent!

Gilliam sees the movie as the final part of a trilogy, a logical progression after *Time Bandits* ('a boy going through space and time and history . . . one never knew whether it was real or a dream') and *Brazil* ('a man who refuses to take responsibility in the real world and spends his time dreaming—he ultimately tries to escape into madness'). *Munchausen* is 'the happy ending . . . it's the old man who may live forever . . . it is the triumph of fantasy'.

Baron Munchausen is played by John Neville, ostensibly a stage actor, and the film tells of his adventures and his flights of fantasy during the Age of Reason (embodied by Jonathan Pryce as Horatio Jackson). An 18th century European city is under siege from the Turkish Army and Munchausen sets off in a hot-air balloon made of silken underwear, with his stowaway companion Sally (Sarah Polly) to find help and defeat the Turks.

Gilliam's film takes us to the Moon where we encounter three-headed beasts and monarchs with detachable heads, to the bowels of the Earth to visit the god Vulcan (Oliver Reed) and his beautiful



bride Venus (Uma Thurman) and into the belly of a giant sea monster.

Along the way the Baron regroups his aging band of adventurers—Albrecht (Winston Dennis), Berthold (Eric Idle), Adolphus (Charles McKeown) and Gustavus (Jack Purvis). In

their youth each had incredible powers but now they are lost and the four elderly men are reluctant to return to their days of adventure when the Baron recruits them to help save Sally's home town from the Turks.

The film may well be one of the most ambitious projects ever

attempted and, along with the internationally famous cast, Gilliam surrounded himself with an incredible amount of talent to help bring the Baron's tales to life. Gilliam's unique vision is enhanced by legendary cinematographer Giuseppe Rotunno who has worked with Visconti and Fellini and we can thank production designer Dante Ferretti, another Fellini compatriot and designer of *The Name of the Rose*, for bringing the film's astonishing locations to life.

Other notable credits are costume designer Gabriella Rescucci and head of the special effects department Richard Conway. The second unit director Michele Soavi should be a familiar name—he directed the brilliant 1987 Italian horror *Stage Fright*.

Even with the film finished and ready for release in Germany, Gilliam's troubles weren't over. Due to one of the Baron's previous cinematic excursions (in 1943) Columbia was told that the film's title couldn't be shown onscreen unless a disclaimer accompanied it explaining that the following film was not the same as the 1943 version. Columbia and Gilliam decided against the disclaimer and consequently the full title of the movie doesn't appear on the screen at any time.

With a budget so high *Baron Munchausen* will have to set box-office records all over the world to stand a chance of recouping its investment. When the film opened in Germany (where it was expected to do its best business) with the biggest promotional launch in the country's history, the returns were good but not astonishing.

One can only hope that the film isn't judged solely by its cost. As one of the best fantasy films ever created it should be savoured with an open eager mind which is ready to be flung to all four corners of the Universe in search of adventure. For once the harsh logistics of movie-making can be left behind. Terry Gilliam is a master magician and, as one knows, the audience should never inquire how a magician performs his tricks. They should just sit back and enjoy the show. **David Cox**

HEART OF MIDNIGHT

Starring: Jennifer Jason-Leigh, Peter Coyote, Brenda Vaccaro, Frank Stallone **Producer** Andrew Gaty, **Screenplay/director** Matthew Chapman. **Distributor** Vestron. **Cert** 18



Sonny (Gale Mayron) and her Uncle Fletcher (Sam Schacht) play dangerous sex games with their victim (Gretchen Holz)

A marvellously perverse (though unfortunately not warped) movie, *Heart of Midnight* starts off wonderfully weird and speeds off uphill almost until the closing credits. I say 'almost' because the finale is something of a predictable letdown – though it does play a guessing game which will keep some viewers intrigued.

Carol Rivers (Jennifer Jason-Leigh) moves out of her mother's house and into the Midnight nightclub, which she's inherited from her recently-deceased favourite uncle Fletcher (Sam Schacht). Make that Fletch the Lech, because Carol eventually finds bondage heaven on the first floor of Midnight.

When she first arrives, she cannot find the keys to a corridor

of locked, colour-coded, rooms. She shrugs and goes to make dinner, but a strange noise makes her walk to the door of the living room where she finds a bunch of keys. These, of course, open the doors, and we are then treated to a some strange vision of bizarre sex scenarios.

There's a white room, seemingly covered in snow, a room filled with apples – the lure of any serpent – and a large room filled with torture devices.

The club is still under construction, and the workmen are rough ol' boys. They try to rape her and are shot by the police, who begin an investigation headed by Detective Dedray (Frank Stallone), who has a talent for bit parts if nothing else

and believes Carol instigated the rape.

Enter irrepressible Peter Coyote (E.T.), who says he's Detective Sharpe from internal affairs – but do we believe him? After all, on one occasion he drugs Carol and we eventually discover that the real Sharpe has been murdered.

Is Coyote a guardian angel or personal demon? It would be unfair to say here. The film relies on surprise, well-paced suspense, good acting from Coyote, Leigh and Brenda Vaccaro – whose turn as a neurotic mother is one of the high points of the movie – and almost interesting direction from Matthew Chapman. The script is a little wormy around the edge (the dialogue is sometimes very wooden) but the plot is tight, and, for the most part, original.

The movie will not suit all tastes. Although it does not contain any explicit scenes of sexual violence – even the attempted rape is well-handled, if such a thing is possible – the mood



As Carol (Jennifer Jason Leigh) leaves home, her over-protective mother Betty (Brenda Vaccaro) shouts words of advice at her

and passion of the film will bring you out of the cinema thinking you've just experienced a very strange film sensation.

I'm surprised that *Heart of Midnight* has only mediocre billing planned for its release – I'd urge you to see it, as a psychological thriller and talking point.

John Gilbert

FRIGHT NIGHT: PART II

Starring: Roddy MacDowell, William Ragsdale, Traci Lin, Julie Carmen, Jonathon Gries. **Producers** Herb Jaffe, Mort Engelberg, **Screenplay** Tim Metcalf, Miguel Tejada-Flores, Tommy Lee Wallace, **Director** Tommy Lee Wallace. **Distributor** Columbia Pictures. **Cert** 18

Fright Night: Part II weighs in as this year's earliest entry into the 'worst horror film of the year' stakes. Described by director Tommy Lee Wallace as both 'sexy and scary', the limp follow-up to

the 1985 hit manages to be little more than boring and silly.

Charley Brewster (William Ragsdale reprising his role) has been in therapy for three years convincing himself that his part in the slaying of the neighbourhood vampire was just a dream. Fearless Vampire Hunter Peter Vincent (MacDowell again) isn't convinced that the ordeal is over, and when a group of stupidly dressed weirdos move into his apartment block and begin the killing all over again the two team up (along with Ragsdale's girlfriend Alex (Traci Lin) to vanquish the powers of evil.

It transpires that the leader of this particular pack, Reegin (Julie Carmen) is not only a naff performance artiste but also Jerry Dandrige's sister out to avenge the murder of her brother by Brewster and Vincent.

There are werewolves, vampiric monstrosities and a kind of bat-creature to keep special effects fans happy but, even with



Eddy (Steve Buscemi) terrorises Carol (Jennifer Jason Leigh) before attempting to rape her





Hamill and Aldridge venture into the *Slipstream*

SLIPSTREAM

Starring: Mark Hamill, Bill Paxton, Ben Kingsley, Bob Peck, Kitty Aldridge, F. Murray Abraham. **Producer/** Director Gary Kurtz, **Screenplay** Steven Lisberger. **Distributor** Entertainment. **Cert** PG

Not so much PG for Parental Guidance as for Pedestrian Garbage, Stephen Lisberger's *Slipstream*, a quasi-ecological science fiction epic starring a disparate batch of Anglo-American actors, is redolent of *The Tomorrow People* series or *Blake's Seven* at their nadir.

The storyline postulates an apocalyptic future. Earth is ravaged by a river of wind, the slipstream of the title, leaving the more enterprising of the mandatory cross-section of vagrants and survivors to travel over long distances by air in fragile aircraft (cue footage of

endless canyons and other geological ephemera). Tasker (a decaying Mark Hamill resembling Malcolm McDowell the day he read his *Caligula* reviews) is the lawman who, accompanied by his tracker Belitski (Kitty Aldridge), apprehends a wanted murderer, pin-striped Byron (Bob Peck), on the evidence here, a graduate of the Brent Spicer school of dramatics, who is promptly appropriated for pecuniary motivations by the avaricious Matt Owens, played with muted gusto by raucous Bill Paxton.

Perambulating along the flora and fauna of this Green

Partyesque landscape in a makeshift aircraft, Byron and Owens (a) precipitate a love-hate relationship that inevitably evolves into friendship and admiration, (b) encounter a fatally wounded hippie-messiah (Ben Kingsley), muttering incomprehensible psycho-babble amid a surfeit of passive subterranean Haight-Asbury refugees, (c) revel in the so-called opulence of a remote city beneath whose ruins live both an incongruous batch of Open University graduates intent on maintaining the cultural equilibrium and a profusion of decadent types who suck in their cheekbones constantly (as if expressing feigned distress at their inability to get into London's Hippodrome).

The former group, the aesthetes, are led by F. Murray Abraham (similarly clad, liked Bob Peck, in the Monday Club/Harvey Proctoreque navy-blue three-piece) who becomes rather perturbed that his inner citadel might be breached by such unsavoury-looking persons. And it goes on.

The problem with *Slipstream* is that its episodic, deliberately non-pyrotechnical narrative, elicits neither intellectual nor

visceral response from the viewer. Whilst it is commendable that producer Gary Kurtz has intentionally avoided anything evocative of the whole *Star Wars* iconography, the alternate moral-parables and saturation aerial shots will not satiate either serious literary SF fans or the Easter Holiday kids weaned on the very examples of the genre that Lisberger, Kurtz et al are so assiduously trying to escape.

Unfortunately, in graciously deciphering the semiology of *Slipstream*, I have neglected to mention that as an actor, Mark Hamill (only sporadically glimpsed) could easily supersede Ken Marshall as the star of a prospective *Krull II*; Bill Paxton is a wonderful wonderful actor when he is not adorned, as here, with the shaggy remnants of Michael Keaton's hair (now littering Pinewood's floor prior to the fitting of Bruce Wayne's rug), and that this movie is ideally a regurgitation from Gene Roddenberry's *Star Trek*. At least ILM/Paramount has illustrious SFX to embellish *Star Trek*'s fatuous liberal diatribes. Back to the Children's Film Foundation, boys. Now, where's my tape of *Mad Max II*? **Markus Natten**



MacDowell and Co. fighting against all odds

the high monster count, *Fright Night: Part II* fails to quicken the pulse. Tommy Lee Wallace manages to use the wide-screen to moderately impressive effect – the movie looks good and the locations are interesting – but it's the irritating cast who really kill the whole production stone dead.

Jonathon Gries as Louie, a goofy-but-deadly werewolf is, without doubt one of the most annoying performances in recent horror movies and a scene where all the vampires take a trip to a bowling alley is astonishing for its sheer pointlessness. It plays like the bar-room scene from *Near Dark* at young teens and is, as you can imagine, close to unwatchable.

The film treads the same moonlit path as the original with characters taking an age to believe in the supernatural threat and generally running through every element of vampire folk-lore. It's a very long 90 minutes of listless generic teen-horror before the climactic battle between Charley, Regine, and a welt of special effects as her followers are despatched – the maggot meltdown is the only moderately successful effect. By the time the full 104 minutes have run their course I can honestly say that it's probably worth spending three years in psychotherapy to convince yourself that *Fright Night: Part II* is, in fact, only a dream. **David Cox**

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MOVIE MAINLINE

LAIR OF THE WHITE WORM

Starring: Amanda Donohoe, Hugh Grant, Catharine Oxenberg, Peter Capaldi, Sammi Davis, Stratford John. **Producer/Screenplay/Director** Ken Russell. **Distribributor** Vestron. **Cert 18.**

Ken Russell has always had a reputation for being outrageous and his latest movie about a legendary giant worm, vampirism, snake worship and virgin sacrifice combine controversy with an out-of-fashion sense of humour.

I say out of fashion because many of Russell's jokes are clichéd to fit the period in which Bram Stoker wrote his novel of the same name. The way in which they are exploited, however, shows that the director is in form for wit if not for the same degree of controversy that marked or plagued him in the past.

ancestor slew the giant worm.

Lady Marsh returns suddenly from abroad, steals the ancient skull from the farm house and begins a reign of sensuous terror as the centuries-old high priestess of a barbaric snake-worshipping cult. Russell and Donohoe work well, putting new life into old jokes. Her disposal of one underaged male victim marked for sacrifice would be corny in any other hands except Russell's. Indeed, viewers could groan at the corny scene in which she meets her downfall if they weren't laughing so much.



The story starts with the discovery of a giant skull by an amateur archaeologist near an old farm house. The house is owned by Mary and Eve Trent whose parents disappeared a year ago near the grounds of Temple House – owned by the mysterious Lady Sylvia Marsh (Donohoe). Eve (Oxenberg) is trysted to the local Lord d'Ampton (Grant), whose

Lair is a magnificent film; quite remarkable considering its meagre budget of a couple of million dollars. Russell has a four-film deal with Vestron and I can't wait for the next picture. Rumour purports that it's *Dracula*. If so, it'll be unlike any version ever produced.

John Gilbert



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SLICER PERKINS SLASHED

Anthony Perkins's latest film is likely to be shredded by British and American certification boards. David Cox finds out why and also looks at romantic vampires, demon disappointments and a district attorney on the RAMPAGE

When you think of Troma Pictures you immediately think censorship. The company's best known releases, *Toxic Avenger* and

Class of Nuke 'Em High both suffered at the hands of the censors, so it's a bit of a surprise to find a Lloyd Kaufman/Michael Hertz-produced film being released not only by a major company (RCA/Columbia) but also with a 15 certificate.

Yep, *I Married a Vampire*, written and directed by Jay Raskin, is actually a rather sweet, off-beat vampire-romance about a young girl, Viola (Rachel Golden), driven to desperation by the cruelties inflicted on her by life on the streets of the big city. She meets up with Robespierre the vampire, the first person ever to show her kindness, and together they take their revenge on all the people who ever did Viola wrong.

Keeping up the romantic-horror theme, RCA/Columbia is also finally releasing *My Demon Lover*, starring Michelle Little and Scott Valentine. You'll most likely recognise the title – it's a film that got extensive coverage in certain US horror magazines early last year due to the amount of special creature FX provided by John Caglione and Doug Drexler.

Unfortunately most of those are only briefly glimpsed but completists will no doubt be interested to see this New Line production, a film the company hoped would be as successful as the *Nightmare on Elm Street* films and blossom into another money-making series.

My Demon Lover only took around £5 million theatrically in

the US last spring so you can wave any sequels goodbye. Whether or not that's a good thing you'll be able to find out in March when both *My Demon Lover* and *I Married a Vampire* are released.

JASON BLEED DRY

Paramount Pictures's horror annuity continues with *Friday the 13th Part VII: The New Blood*, directed this time by the ex-Empire cellar dweller himself, John Carl Buechler. His JCB initials are quite apt as this is a workman-like entry into the most famous of all slasher series although the addition of a *Carrie*-inspired heroine who battle the mad might of Jason

with her psychic powers adds a spark of interest.

Tina (Lar Park Lincoln), with her mother and devious shrink in tow, heads back to Crystal Lake for some on-site psychiatric therapy after a family tragedy occurred there years ago. Her psychic powers are at their peak and Tina attempts to raise her drowned father from the notorious lake but only succeeds in releasing Jason, buried at sea by Tommy Jarvis in the previous sequel. Twelve teenagers and two adults run the gamut of messy deaths as Jason, looking a little water-logged and worse for wear after spending so long underwater, goes on another bloody killing spree. Tina and

Friday The 13th Part VII – The New Blood



Jason battle it out in the grand finale – Jason gets hanged, burnt and squashed by a house.

Unfortunately, *The New Blood* is the driest sequel yet but, to be honest, you don't watch *Friday the 13th* movies for much more than then blood 'n' gore effects. It's not the BBFC you have to blame this time for the comparative lack of grue: the movie was pre-cut by Paramount to appease the MPAA and ensure an R rating for its summer release. Coming straight after the best Jason movie of the bunch, *Jason Lives*, you may find the eighth entry a bit of a step backwards, but moderately entertaining nonetheless.

DEATH PENALTY

Although not a horror film in the afore-mentioned *Friday The 13th*-style, veteran director William Friedkin's *Rampage* is as astonishing and chilling a film as you're likely to see all year. It's been on the shelf at De Laurentiis Entertainment Group for almost a year and a half but thankfully CBS/FOX



Michael Biehn in William Friedkin's *Rampage*

has picked it up for release in March.

Michael Biehn is Anthony Fraser, the assistant DA in charge of the major crimes division, assigned to the case of a young man, Charles Reece (Alex MacArthur). Reece has been charged with murdering, mutilating, raping and drinking the blood of five victims and Fraser, against all his beliefs, is told to fight for the death penalty.

Rampage packs the strongest punch in any other film of its kind for some time and it's an experience that's difficult to

shake-off – even when only viewed on video. The murder scenes are shocking but handled by Friedkin with with admirable, if uncharacteristic, restraint and MacArthur's performance as the schizophrenic Reece is top-notch.

Last up is Gerard Kikione's *Edge of Sanity*, starring Anthony Perkins. The Hungarian production is a mixture of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde with a bit of Jack The Ripper and the result is not only boring but also offensive and misogynistic. Perkins, who really should be ashamed of himself, puts in a performance that out-sweats and out-twitches that of his *Crimes of Passion* outing – he plays Jekyll who inhales an experimental drug and goes out to torture, degrade and slash east London prostitutes.

This trash is doubly confusing through its odd concept of period – it's supposed to be set in Victorian London so why is one streetwalker wearing a BOY belt-buckle and why does Glynis Barber offer somebody a £1 coin?

It is undecided whether *Edge of Sanity* will go straight to video or not, but the BBFC is coming down hard on it and you can expect to see a tamer version than the one I was unfortunate enough to see recently at London's Scala Cinema. Whatever the classification, avoid at all costs.



CAMERON'S CLOSET

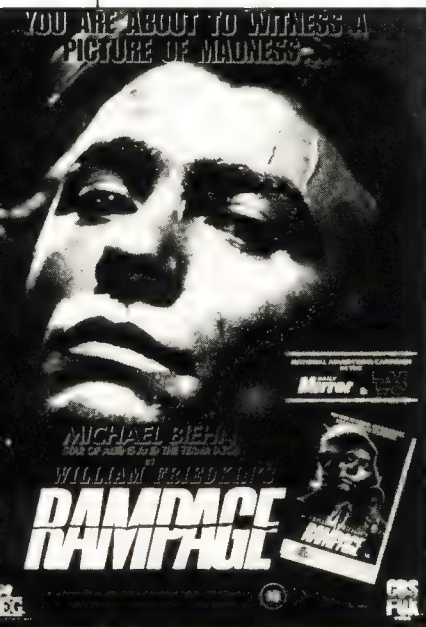
Starring: Cotter Smith, Mel Harris, Scott Curtiss, Tab Hunter. **Producer** Luigi Cingolani, **Screenplay** Gary Brandner, **Director** Armand Mastroianni. **Distributor** Warner Home Video. **Cert** 18, 83 mins

Gary Brandner is shamefully neglected in the UK. The author's *Howling* trilogy made him a raging success in the early Eighties – but *Cameron's Closet*, one of his latest stories, has reached Britain in film form before the book which, of which there is still no firm publication news.

This spunky supernatural

thriller stars **Scott Curtiss** as Cameron, whose telekinetic powers over physical objects have been developed by his father Owen Lansing, played by Sixties heart-throb Tab Hunter.

The experiments get out of hand when Cameron starts to play with a strange statue which he calls Deceptor. It is, in fact, the





EVIL ALTAR

Starring: William Smith, Tal Armstrong, Jack Vogel, Theresa Cooney, Marcus Wyatt. **Producers** Robert A Miller, George C Briggs, **Screenplay** Brent Friedman, Scott Rose, John Geilfuss, **Director** Jim Wimburn. **Distributor** Braveworld. **Cert** 18, 90 mins

The price of immortality is reportedly high, but Reed Weller (**William Smith**), a small-town necromancer, doesn't care. He's not the one who will suffer – just the one who will benefit.

The cure for mortality? Just 103 innocent children, gathered and duly sacrificed on his altar. The gathering is done by The Collector, a man magically bound to Weller 30 years ago, who seems to have a strong aversion to sunlight – judging by the goggles he wears.

Weller tells him not to collect children from the nearby town, but even evil can have its off days. His servant takes a boy after a baseball match and is shot by a young hunter while taking the sacked body back to his master. He soon revives, though, and the son of a visiting lawyer (**Tal Armstrong**) is taken, much to the father's chagrin.

The local police force is in awe of Weller and won't help get the boy back, but some of the town's residents start to question the necromancer's activities.

The brutal, fire-blasted, ending in which evil is destroyed is full of tension, but the final scenes in

which the evil is shown to continue reek of cliché which, until then, the low-budget film has largely managed to avoid.

The necessity for special effects has also been avoided by a modicum of clever editing. In one scene, for instance, Weller buries a hatchet in someone's back. We don't actually see it go in, but a quick flashback to Weller pulling up the axe and a cut to the bloody

body on the floor give the idea and also maintain enough tension, so the action doesn't appear to jolt from one sequence to the next.

This is not a major presentation from Braveworld, but the company has continued to select good backup titles for its major releases, such as the interesting *Monster Squad*.

John Gilbert

likeness of an ancient demon who can only be raised by the will of an innocent child. As long as the child's will holds strong the demon can be controlled: indeed, for a time, it acts as Cameron's friend, killing his enemies. But the demon is out to destroy Cameron's will and life.

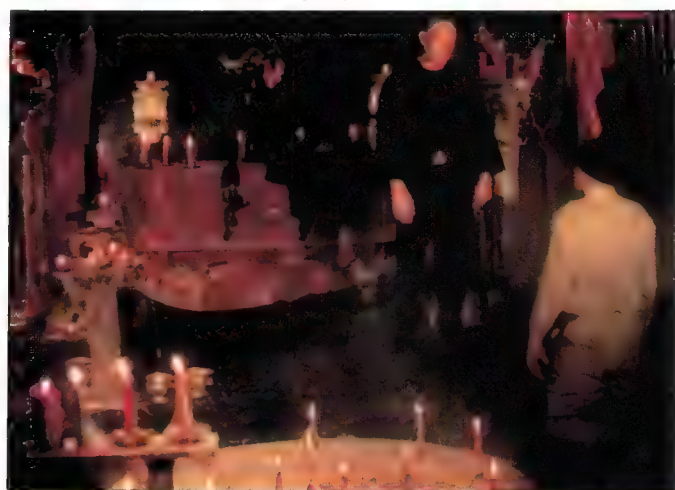
Fortunately, detective Sam Tallaferro (**Cotter Smith**) is on hand. He's been having strange dreams about a skyborne seagull – an image with which Owen Lansing has taught his son to control his wayward powers. Also drawn into the story is Nora Haley, a police psychologist who knows about matters of the mind and helps Tallaferro and Cameron get through the experience.

The finale, where we at last meet the incredible Deceptor demon, is something of a masterpiece thanks to the work of **Carlo Rambaldi** (*E.T.*) and son. A combination of good animatronics and lighting give the monster a menacing presence, amplified by the intercutting of its shadowy image during the film.

It seems, however, that some cost-cutting exercises were performed. For instance, Tab Hunter is decapitated during the first half-hour and, despite the use of slow motion, the sequence unfortunately shows the dummy parts for too long. Similarly, some of the chase and eerie search sequences within the film are played out in a way which loses the momentum of tension rather than adds to it.

Armand Mastroianni has, in general, produced a good low-budget movie which, with the right marketing, will do reasonably well on video. It may not have the production values of, say, the *Nightmare* films or *Hellraiser*, but it provides shocks and, at a time when there's a slight dearth of good material on the market, that's better than watching a teen western.

John Gilbert



GRANDMOTHER'S HOUSE

Starring: Eric Foster, Kim Valentine, Len Lesser, Ida Lee. **Producer** Nico Mastorakis, **Screenplay** Peter Jensen, **Director** Peter Rader. **Distributor** Guild Home Video. **Cert** 18, 92 mins

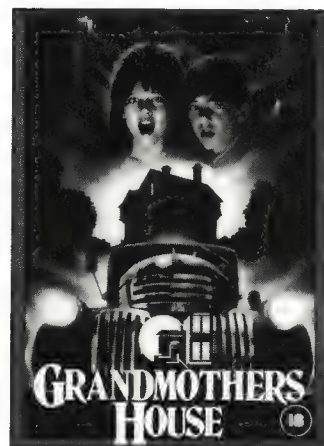
Two recently orphaned children, David (Eric Foster) and Lynn (Kim Valentine) arrive at their grandparents' house where they are to live.

Memories of the past come back to David. He dreams of a mysterious girl and of his grandparents carrying a body down to the cellar. Reality blends with fantasy when a body is discovered in a nearby lake and a young girl sighted near the house. David believes the old pair are up to no good, but it's not until he's threatened by his grandfather because the mysterious girl is held captive in the garage of the old house that he realises the danger.

He releases her but she attacks

him, kills his grandmother and goes on the rampage. David soon discovers that incest is at the centre of the mystery and that his father isn't dead.

Grandmother's House could have been filmed as a hokey B-picture but the general production values save the unsavoury but much-used and abused storyline. All credit to director Peter Rader who manages to combine the beauty of the surrounding American countryside with the sinister darkness of the house. Eric Foster and Kim Valentine, as the young brother and sister, produce good, though unimaginative, performances and veteran actor Len Lesser is suitably evil as a



grandfather who doesn't need any lessons from wicked stepmothers.

John Gilbert

DR ALIEN

Starring: Billy Jacoby, Judy Landers, Michelle Bauer, Linnea Quigley. **Producer/screenplay/director** David DeCoteau. **Distributor** Colour Box. **Cert** 18, 89 mins

This film could be subtitled *Gary Glitter: The Early Years* because the lead actor (**Billy Jacoby** as Wesley) is a dead ringer, although you have to wait until the end of the movie to see the reason for this nagging notion.

Wesley is a regular nerd, the kind of guy who feigns blindness to escape injury from an irritated bully. Then one day a new teacher

appears to teach biology. Dr Xenobia starts the ball rolling with a good dose of sex education, using layman's terms where simple technical names would suffice.

As the teacher is portrayed by a very attractive **Judy Landers**, when she asks for a volunteer to stay after school there's no shortage of eager boys . . .

except Wes is impervious to her sexuality (he really is a nerd) and only agrees to assist if he gets grade points.

So, Wes helps Dr Xenobia, only to be injected with a substance that makes him the object of women's sexual desires. Among the numerous women are **Linnea Quigley** and **Michelle Bauer** (cover girl of *Hollywood Chainsaw Hookers*) (oops, there's that word again – Ed.)

The whole sexist romp has an extremely cheerful tone, partly because of the ladies, who all act with a glint in their eyes!

The film's climax takes place at a concert where Wes is now lead singer with a group called the Sex



Mutants – I Was a Teenage Sex Mutant was a previous title for this movie – and this is, of course, where the Gary Glitter connection appears.

Hero Wes bounds about the stage looking, posing and gesticulating like the pop legend. So, if you like your entertainment pneumatic, rent this video instead of a made-to-a-researched-formula film like *Revenge of the Nerds 2*.

John Glenday

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He's above the law. Even cops won't get in the way once he's taken a shine to you.

AND HE'S EVIL . . .

Yes, you too can have such a friend. Just tell us which avenging actor appeared in **Gary Brandner's** first *Howling* films and send your answer on a postcard or the bag of a sealed envelope to **OUT OF THE CLOSET COMPETITION, FEAR, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB.**

All entries must be in by March 15, when five correct answers will be drawn. No employees of Newsfield, Medusa or **FEAR** may take part.



ANCIENT IMAGES

Ramsey Campbell
Publisher Century
Hutchinson, Format
Hardback, £10.95
Category Horror

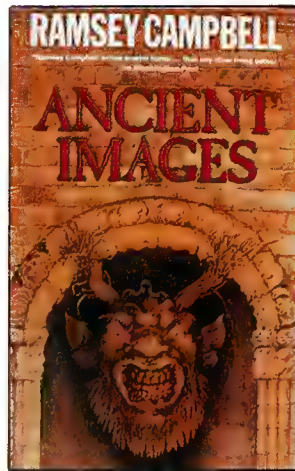
Few writers have the ability to play games with their readers and, with deft assurance, do any more than hope to get away with them. One such writer is Ramsey Campbell.

His latest book in part uses some old horror genre clichés to hide the brilliant shudder-inducing mechanisms of his story and one of the darkest finales in any of his books – his darkest by far is of course in *The Influence*.

The mysterious game is set within the first few chapters. How, for instance, can a creaky old film, starring masters Karloff and Lugosi, induce death in the present? Why are so many people keen to disavow its existence? What will happen when the heroine of the story, Sandy Allan eventually finds and views the film?

You don't want that answered in a review, do you? So be content with knowing that Campbell uses it to draw attention away from the subtle horrors which sneak on and off the page. If you're not paying close attention you'll miss them. Serves you right, but don't blame yourself as the creatures and shadows which are chained to the pages are difficult to pin down once you've read through the few sneaky sentences which contain them.

There are few modern horror novels in which the art of creating menaced is so finely tuned and



concentrated. The melodrama evokes the thespian spirits of Karloff and Lugosi, often taking the reader away from reality, but Campbell always provides an anchor in the seedy way he describes a supposedly glittering film world and in the locations of his story, London and the North which couldn't be further away from Jacuzzis and movie moguls.

Ancient Images is one of those rare novels with which it pays to read every word. Too few modern writers use the word as their currency. Rather they are content to to smuggly rely on their abilities to produce the easily skimmed sentence or paragraph. Ramsey Campbell is, therefore, a rare novelist who has, thankfully, not given in to writing the glossy prepacked meat so beloved of some of his contemporaries and their publishers. What more recommendation does any true horror fan need?

out in a deluxe hardback collector's edition from Kerosina over here – but whatever the packaging, this is truly an outstanding book.

Shepard's novels to date, *Green Eyes* and *Life During Wartime*, have been good, but he is still at his very best in the midlength novella form, and this collection has a fistful of unforgettable pieces.

There's *Salvador*, a bitter and gritty near-future projection in which the US army is bogged down in a Vietnam-style conflict in Central America (I remember a horrific moment when a crazed GI tosses a prisoner out of a helicopter while reciting the opening narration of *Star Trek* – one of the most pointed, political sequences in recent fantasy). There's *Delta Sly Honey*, a haunting ghost story set during the chaos of 'Nam itself.

Title story *The Jaguar Hunter* and *Solitario's Eyes*, supernatural fables set in a richly-imagined Latino jungle, testify to Shepard's kinship with the South American magical realists.

The Night of the White Bhairab and *How the Wind Spoke at Mardaket* are powerful horror stories involving malevolent demon creatures at large in India and the New England coast. Then there's *Black Coral* and *A Traveller's Tale*, linked stories set on the Caribbean backwater island of Guanoja Manor; the Nazi-shadowed atrocity tales of *Mengele* and *A Spanish Lesson*; the sharp critiques of American hypocrisy in *The Exercise of Faith* and *The End of Life As We Know It*.

The uncategorisable, intensely bizarre fantasy *The Man Who Painted the Dragon Griaule* – a sort of combination of *Lust for Life* and *Moby Dick* – is rated by Michael Bishop, who contributed the foreword, as the best story here. He could be right, but it would be a close thing.

Set in an alternative past, this one deals with a crazed painter who proposes that the centuries-long rule of a now-sleeping dragon could be ended by painting a poisonous picture on the monster's hide. It's at once mystifying and straightforward, and pays off with an eerily moving twist.

In a field where fantasy is too often equated with an escape into pastoral whimsy or meaningless gung-ho warrior-worship, Shepard is a rare voice, committed and angry, wrapped up in a variety of Third World cultures, conscious of the fragility of America's place in an increasingly global society, and yet still capable of stirring up the old magic.

Like Clive Barker and Geoff Ryman, Shepard mixes his personal concerns with literally astonishing imagery and acutely-observed characterisations.

Paladin has wisely packaged Shepard as fiction rather than straitjacketing him with a genre tag, and given him a jacket of the type you might find on Gabriel Garcia Marquez or Manuel Puig (the Latin American connection is inescapable). This will, one hopes, get him the widest possible audience.

I'm not a great believer in statuette-giving, but this time the World Fantasy Awards Committee got it right.

Kim Newman



GREENBRIAR QUEEN

The Dark Lord's rule is about to hit the beautiful land of Ilyria at the start of **Sheila Gilluly's** fabulous new fantasy novel (Headline, £6.95).

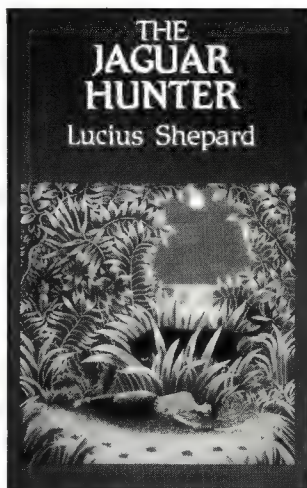
The kindly but powerful Greenbriar King, an obvious pagan inference in the book, is dead, his heirs have disappeared and his evil bastard half-brother is on the throne. His advisor, a black wizard, is a disciple of The Dark Lord and has the power to resurrect him, but, before he can do so, he needs to spill the blood of the Princess Ariadne, the true heir to the throne. A band of loyal warriors, called Watchmen, group to her aid but they have no magic powers and it's only a matter of time before the Ariadne's life is forfeit.

The Greenbriar Queen contains many elements of popular folklore and history. The relationship between true heirs and evil bastards has been quoted by Shakespeare and is even borne out in English history with Richard and John. The book is, therefore, more than just an lively and enchanting read. It's also interesting to see how many lines of epic folklore and myth you can find spun into this tale. An almost scholarly work.

29TH PAN BOOK OF HORROR STORIES

Another round of mostly born-again horror, but, as always,

THE JAGUAR HUNTER



Lucius Shepard
Publisher Paladin, Format
trade paperback, £5.95
Category Fantasy

At the World Fantasy Convention Banquet, Lucius Shepard was several times called up to collect awards. One was for a friend who couldn't attend the function, but the others were deservedly for his own work, and the Best Collection nod went to *The Jaguar Hunter*.

The book is a selection of the very best of the author's work from 1983 (when he made his first appearance) to 1987, and consists of stories that have been seen in *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction* and Isaac Asimov's *Science Fiction Magazine*.

It was first published by Arkham House in the US, and is

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NEVERNESS



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THE 29th PAN BOOK OF HORROR STORIES

Selected by CLARENCE PAGET



More tales from the darkest depths of
imagination in the original bestselling series...

editor Clarence Paget, has chosen a selection which will at least guarantee the new genre reader a taste of the best.

The prize of this collection (Pan, £2.50) is *The Ledge* by Stephen King, but honours must also go to Alan Temperley for *Florence in the Garden*, an eerie and disgusting look at modern suburban life, *Flesh*, by Norman P. Kaufman, which diaries the tales of a prison warder, and the irrepressible *Surgeon's Tale* by J.P. Dixon.

The latter, placed as it is at the start of the book, gives some idea of the physical nature of the horrors within the other stories. It deals with the infliction of physical pain—amputation which puts you in mind of tales by Dahl and King.

A pleasurable enough read, though little new in form or telling for the expert horror reader.

NEVERYON I: TALES OF NEVERYON

Samuel R. Delany is well known for his science fiction and SF criticism. It was, therefore, with slight surprise that I read the first volume of the Neveryon quartet (Grafton, £3.50). It is without doubt a fantasy, and a very good one at that.

It's basically similar to the *Thieves' World* books where you take a world and develop certain of its characters within short stories. As the author explains within his introduction, the place that the book visits is uncertain as is the timing of the stories, but one thing's for sure, it's full of eastern promise, beautiful sunscapes and a warm sea.

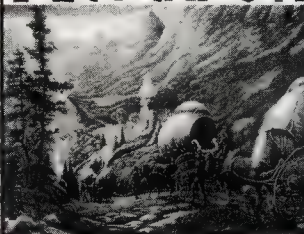
Not the sort of place in which nightmares occur, but then the stories are more about people's desires, inadequacies and triumphs than insidious evil. Take, for instance, *The Tale of Gorgik* who started life as a slave and became a captain of armies

yet was held still by a secret desire, or *The Tale of Old Venn*: a fisherman's daughter is set free from her life amongst the rotting boats. All show a wide section of character, action and ingenious locality which will no doubt be further developed as the series progresses.

SAMUEL R. DELANY

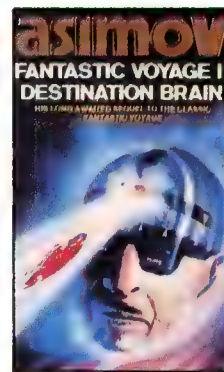
ALTIORUM
STARS IN MY POCKET LIKE GRAINS OF SAND

Tales of NEVERYON



VOLUME ONE OF
HIS MAGNIFICENT FANTASY SERIES

Neveryon is certainly a place for fantasy readers to visit, as interesting as magical Baghdad, ancient Egypt, or Byzantium, but maybe less enchanting. Its stories are physical, of people on the lower rungs of society's ladder—or brought down to them—and will therefore entertain those looking for something other than high romance and glossy quests. Something different, and, if only for that reason alone, enjoyable.



FANTASTIC VOYAGE II

Isaac Asimov has always been one of my favourite SF writers so it's unfortunate, to say the least, that he should release a mediocre sequel to his novelisation of the 1966 film (Grafton, £3.99).

The sequel's storyline shadows that of the original. A Russian scientist has a world shattering secret but has gone into a coma before passing it on. The Russians employ American scientist Albert Jonas Morrison to extract the information. He's miniaturised and sent into the man's brain—

which, if science is correct, also contains his thoughts.

Suffice it to say that there's nothing new here and certainly no surprises for *Fantastic Voyage* fans. Indeed, the book reeks of the

Sixties, and sounds as futuristic as some of *Star Trek's* early episodes seen in the Eighties. A great disappointment from a man who is still a master of his genre.

NIGHTMARE MOVIES: A CRITICAL HISTORY FROM 1968

Kim Newman
Publisher Bloomsbury,
Format Large Format
Paperback, £12.95
Category Film/non-fiction

Kim Newman started work on *Nightmare Movies* in 1983 and of the hundreds of films viewed, the most recent were seen on May 3, 1988. That he has brought what may be described as his critical dictionary so far up to date is perhaps the most significant aspect of this valuable and highly readable book.

Nightmare Movies does have its flaws and before singing its praise too loudly, it's only fair to explore them.

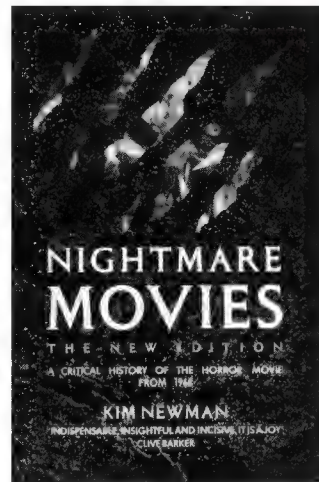
I approached the book's index first, having read Newman's subtitle. Such a claim must also boast references second to none and, at first glance, they seem exhaustive. The two-page bibliography is not stunning, but an eight-page index of alternative movie titles and three times as many pages of small print index lifted my heart. But, what goes up must come down and a heart once lifted is no exception.

Having recently seen again John Huston's *Wise Blood* (1979), I searched for the director's name. I found four indexed references and quickly turned to the first on page 37. No John Huston. Indeed I read it several times over to make sure. Each time the name Walter Huston stared boldly from the page.

At first thought this error, which is by far eclipsed by the brilliance of the author's prose, seemed simply a minor blemish. In fact, it is not. *Nightmare Movies* has within it the power to serve as the most important reference work of its kind, but only if it's free from the kind of errors which render it unreliable. With a worth such as this, the index is a fundamental part of the whole.

I can, however, say without hesitation, that the book is a classic work which will remain a masterpiece of critical prose. His reluctance, however, to look further back than 1968 reveals a further flaw.

If Newman's publisher was more confident of the market



which clearly exists, the division of the book into chapter could have become divisions into volumes. That he limits his scope to those years between 1968 and present day is a worthy attempt to recognise his own scope of knowledge. Newman does, however, have the resources to set in context those movies with which he deals, with the early experimentation of the Twenties and Thirties by the masters of surrealism such as Hans Richter, Max Ernst and Jean Cocteau whose *Beauty and the Beast* was a forerunner for the handling of *The Company of Wolves*, which Newman in one of his few weaknesses of heart chooses to call an 'Amicus anthology shot through with elementary psychology'. Not just 'sustained peculiarity' but in this critic's view, very probably one of the most beautiful stories ever told within its own peculiar genre.

As for *Nightmare Movies*, it is a sharp-eyed focus on those facets of our perception as human beings which bond us in the way that others do not. We experience fear in a way which confirms a primacy within the species as a whole and the horror movie is a derivative of this primal unity embodied in the storytelling of ancient civilisations.

This, Kim Newman knows well. His critical history confirms it, but it will be for the reader in 2010 to confirm whether he knew it well enough.

Ian McKay

LOWLAND RIDER



Chet Williamson
Category Horror

Chet Williamson ripped into the horror genre with his shattering debut novel *Soulstorm*, followed by the sinister, well-crafted *Ash Wednesday*. Now, with *Lowland Rider*, he has written his best book yet.

Lowland Rider tells the tale of Jesse Gordon, a man driven to a life of vagrancy after the loss of his family in senseless slaughter. Having lost all interest in life, he descends into the nightmarish world of the New York subway. Riding trains to nowhere, scavenging for dirty food and

occasionally using the funds accumulated from his life above ground, Jesse lives out a miserable existence in the underworld.

Seeing the degradation of the world below the city, Jesse starts a personal vendetta against this subterranean lowlife: rapists, drug-pushers, murderers... and Enoch. Apparently the cause of the mayhem around him, Enoch is a manipulator of men, his persona of physical beauty hiding an utterly evil soul.

With the character of Jesse, Williamson demonstrates how easily a man can be debased from a respectable citizen to a down-and-out and vigilante. He probes the depths of loneliness and injects *Lowland Rider* with a humanity rarely seen in comparable horror novels. Commendably mature, unlike so many authors who sacrifice plot for excessive visceral sensationalism, Williamson only resorts to the bloody to enhance the atmosphere where necessary.

Chet Williamson has had the imagination and courage to expand upon his own ideas and produce a highly innovative and original novel which grips the reader from the first train ride to the final confrontation between

IN THE LAND OF THE DEAD

"Jeter is one of the most impressive bodies of work in the horror field today. This book is what I believe contemporary horror fiction should be." Ramsey Campbell

This first edition is limited to 1000 copies. 300 include additional articles by Charles de Lint and Ramsey Campbell. Each is numbered, slipcased, specially bound, and signed by the contributors.

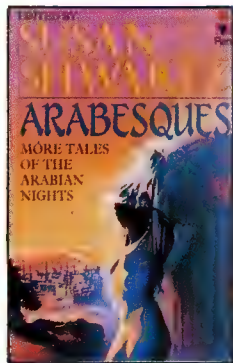
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PUBLICATIONS

Jesse and Enoch. *Lowland Rider* is the bleakest and most downbeat horror novel of 1988, and it is unlikely to be bettered in '89.



ARABESQUES

You may not be acquainted with **Susan Schwartz** but her name demands high praise as the editor of the most original and enthralling anthologies of the past two years.

Arabesques (Pan, £3.99) takes the Arabian world of *The Thousand and One Nights* and produces high class stories in a similar vein. Bullish indolent jinns, shrewish princesses and crafty kings are interwoven with a linking story about a young English knight who believes he's being held, he at first believes, for ransom as a captive guest of a caravan trader.

The list of guest authors contains many VIPs of fantasy/SF fiction. Gene Wolf provides a beautiful tale of Nightingale, a rose, and a young thief bound up in blood, Harry Turtledove tells of an ancient mythical war banner and Jane Yolen recounts the *Memoirs of a Bottle Jinni*.

Best, perhaps, is the wickedly funny *Elephant-in-Law* by Elizabeth Scarborough. It sums up the mirth and glamour of this wonderful collection with a satirical look at the mighty Jinn – in this case an incredibly obese lady who couldn't, by any stretch of the imagination, get into a bottle much less get off her cushions.

THE BOOK OF THE DAMNED

The first book in the Paradys series by **Tanith Lee** but, from its contents of interconnected novellas, who can tell whether she means Paradise or Parody?

I nod toward the latter because the book first sets up some wonderful ideas and then inverts them, though you're never quite sure. All the tales take place in or around Paradys where duels are



fought over honour, death is not final and women can live as men – or is it the other way around? Lee tackles some pretty hefty

DOWN RIVER

Stephen Gallagher
Publisher Hodder and Stoughton, Format hardback, £10.95
Category Psychological thriller/horror

Stephen Gallagher's last two books, *Valley of Lights* and *Oktober*, have cumulatively made him into a best-seller and a respected author in the fantasy, horror and, to some extent, science-fiction genres.

His new hardback, *Down River*, will no doubt take the process further and, in so doing, secure him a place as a mainstream author.

The book has certain parallels with *Valley of Lights*, though no overtly supernatural creature is in evidence. The creature with which the reader has to deal is, perhaps, more disturbing than any fantastical creation.

He's a policeman called Johnny Mays: a policeman with a little black book and a big chip on his shoulder. He believes that the guilty should be punished and anyone who transgresses in his eyes, even if they just look like a criminal type, is put into the black book from which all justice is meted out.

That justice is not necessarily fair. Johnny's partner Nick suspects him of torture, bribery and corruption, but only knows that he's gone too far when Johnny sets up some local kids for a motorway race. The crazed cop tries to run them off the road, but it is the police car that plunges into the reservoir.

Nick survives, but Johnny is apparently drowned... and then the people in the little black book start to die. Nick realises that Johnny may not be dead – and that he is on the vengeance list.

ideas and beliefs along the way, often confusing the reader but more often providing startling insights to established themes. She deals with genetic disease in a similar way to director David Cronenberg, and shows that what we see of religion or sex is only governed by what we understand.

The author is a true mystic who is, nevertheless, willing to use horror to achieve her effect. Yes, these are stories of horror as well as fantasy and there's a true gothic flavour mixed in with Lee's enviable style. A masterful piece of fiction and I look forward to more stories from Paradys, though whether I can withstand them I do not know.

John Gilbert



get dragged towards the end by Smith's almost manic efforts to sustain plot and action. Fans will love it and with the republication of *The Crabs* books by Grafton later this year they can be assured that there are many more novels after *Mania*.

HORROR 100 BEST BOOKS

Edited by Stephen Jones and Kim Newman
Publisher Xanadu, Format hardback, £10.95
Category Nonfiction/horror

Labours of love are all too often either irritating compilations of what the editors think is worthy in a particular field, or long, trite, topographies of that field. It's not often that a book comes along that is a real labour of love and a good read.

I am, therefore, pleased that two of the horror genre's most respected chroniclers have got together to produce a book about the best work in the field by, arguably, its best writers. Each entry is a personal vote of gratitude to particular works of fiction. And though some of the tie-ups between writers and influential books are surprising, there are others at which you can nod and say 'I guessed he or she'd choose that subject'.

Stephen Laws's enthusiasm for genre films makes *Quatermass and the Pit* an ideal choice, **R Chetwynd-Hayes's** fascination with the traditional ghost story makes *The Turn of the Screw* equally predictable, and **Clive Barker's** insights into *Dr Faustus* are compatible with some of his fiction.

Some choices do, however, stand out as oddities. **John Skipp's** selection of a **John Brunner** novel, for instance, is a little out of public character, and **Guy N Smith's** choice of **Charles L Grant's** *The Pet* doesn't quite fit in with his writing persona.

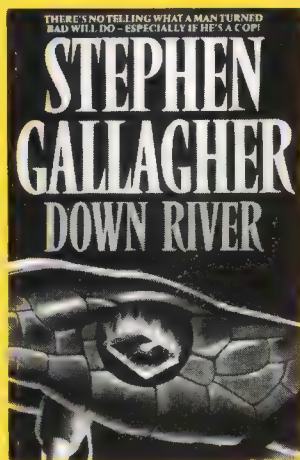
The book is fascinating, all the same, providing fans with both a unique survey of horror and an insight into the creative preferences of many fine writers.

John Gilbert



The waters are dark and deep
DOWN RIVER

Win a signed copy of Stephen Gallagher's controversial new novel



Johnny Mays is a sociopath. His vindictive crimes against what he sees as the scum of society are numerous and frequently violent. He's a sadist, a house-breaker, probably a rapist, a murderer, a blackmailer, by society's standards a criminal of the worst sort.

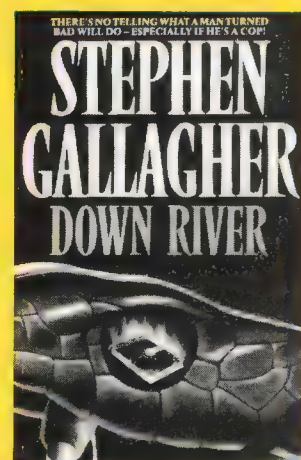
He's also a police-man . . . and that should worry you!

We have 12 signed copies of the recently-published hardback to give away, courtesy of Hodder and Stoughton. And

to win this new novel by the *Valley of Lights* author, all you have to do is tell us where in America is the Valley of Lights!

Send your answer, together with your name, address and telephone number, on a post-card or the back of a sealed envelope to: **Old Man River Competition, FEAR, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB.**

All entries should reach us by March 15 and, as usual, no employees of Newsfield, Hodder and Stoughton, or **FEAR** may take part.



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ANCIENT

An Introduction

Can you believe that Karloff and Lugosi made a film together here in Britain that no one has ever seen? The Victorian ghost story it was based on seems to have disappeared, and

the film was being condemned even before its completion. That was in the Thirties, when we were supposed to have had enough of horror films, but I've a feeling this one particularly upset some people in high places. I hope we'll soon

have the chance to judge it for ourselves.'

The speaker is Graham Nolan, the film buyer for Metropolitan Television, who prides himself on tracking down and restoring rare films so that they can be broadcast. *Tower of Fear* is the last film he ever tracks down, and it seems to be the death of him. His friend and colleague Sandy Allan visits him that night at his home, but there's no sign of the copy of *Tower of Fear* which he was about to show her. There's only Graham on the neighbouring roof.

'She wrenched at the catch of the double-glazing with one hand, waved her other hand desperately at him to delay him. But just as the catch slid out of its socket, he sprinted to the edge and jumped.

'He'd already done it once, she told herself as he reached the edge. However wide the gap looked, he had managed to cross it safely, never mind why he was up there at all. The thoughts didn't slow her heart down or allow her to breathe,

nor did they help him. As she sidled the inner pane clear of its grooves, he missed the roof above her, and fell.

'She saw him fall into the beam of light. His hair blazed like a silver halo. His mouth was gaping, silenced perhaps by the wind of his fall, and yet she thought he saw her and, despite his terror, managed to look unbearably apologetic, as if he wanted her to know that it wasn't her fault she hadn't been in time to reach him. That moment seemed so unreal and so prolonged that she was almost able to believe the light had arrested him somehow, like a frame of film. Then he was gone, and as her breath screamed out she heard a thud below like the sound of meat slung onto a butcher's slab.

'She dropped the pane on the carpet and fumbled the other window open, sobbing. Graham lay between the buildings, at the rim of a pool of light from a riverside streetlamp. He looked small and pathetic as a discarded doll. His legs were bent on either side of his head, which seemed too large, its



She drove with the windows down, to feel the breath of the reddening sky on her face, and came off the urban motorway near Gunnersbury Park. Walter Trantom lived in a block of flats on Chiswick High Road. Its dozens of identical rectangular panes appeared to be emitting the blurred roar – as she'd spoken to him – the roar of the motorway beyond. As she locked the car, two youths with Dobermans strutted by, jerking their thighs at the air. A green light's worth of cars sped past in the direction of the airport, and their individual notes were swallowed by the monotonous roar of the landscape.

Sandy stepped over trodden chips and hamburger cartons in the entrance to the flats, and rang the bell for Trantom. The intercom mumbled at her, its words almost indistinguishable because of the remains of a cheeseburger that had been stuffed into the grille. 'Sandy Allan,' she said, having poked the answer button gingerly with one fingernail, and peered at the entrance hall through safety glass smeared with ketchup. The man who plodded down the unlit concrete stairs was almost at the glass before she saw his face.

Even allowing for the way telephones shrank voices, he hadn't sounded nearly so large. He was at least a head taller than Sandy, and twice as broad. He wore faded green check trousers and a frayed purple cardigan, with spectacles poking out of the torn breast pocket. He opened a crack between the door and the frame and lowered his balding head towards it, blinking fiercely. 'Who, er, who did you say?' he demanded.

She could see pimples under the stripes of mousy hair. 'Sandy Allan. We said eight o'clock.'

'It's only five to,' he said inaccurately, glancing at his wristwatch. It had string in place of a strap. He

IMAGES

by Ramsey Campbell

outline spreading. Sandy felt as if she were toppling out of the window towards him. As she staggered backwards, the building opposite seemed to nod at her, and a shape reared up on its roof.

'It must have been the ventilator. When she managed to focus she saw the boxy funnel on which two weeds were flowering. She walked rapidly to the door and took a shuddering breath, and ran across the main room to the phone before the smell of pastry could make her sick. She swallowed several times while the emergency number rang. 'Ambulance,' she gasped, and gave the details in a voice that felt almost too calm.

And that might be the end of it – Sandy might be content with the police's explanation that Graham, once an athlete, died while chasing a thief – except that the film reviewer of the *Daily Friend* starts insisting in print that there never was a film.

Now Sandy is determined to save Graham's reputation. His

boyfriend Toby gives her Graham's notebook which lists all the other people he contacted in his search for the film, and she is too preoccupied with retracing his hunt to notice that she's also being hunted:

'She walked Toby to Victoria Station and left him at the barrier. On her way into the Underground she thought he'd followed her, but there was nobody to be seen behind her on the escalator that sailed downward with a faint inconsolable squeal. She sat on a bench on the empty platform, the breaths of oncoming trains stirring the hairs on the back of her neck. She leafed through Graham's notebook, but couldn't concentrate; she found she had to keep glancing along the platform toward the tunnel. Some fault in the mechanism made the train doors reopen after she boarded, as if someone had leapt on at the last moment. The galloping rush of the wheels made her think of a hunt in the dark.

'Someone was walking a dog in

Queen's Wood. Sandy couldn't see the owner, but she heard the animal in the undergrowth. Once she glimpsed its ribs through a gloomy clump of bushes. Even if it was a greyhound, it looked in need of feeding. She thought she saw its eyes glistening, but they turned out to be weeds blurred by shadows

Early in the search she comes home to her flat to find her pet cats run over outside the house and Graham's notebook destroyed. She doesn't realise that it may not have been the cats which clawed the book to pieces. She recalls all the information from the notebook she can call to mind, for nothing can put her off searching. By the time she learns that she is reawakening an ancient English secret which the film inadvertently set free, will it be too late for her? Here she is early in her search, in an encounter far less strange and disturbing than she is later to walk into...

Ramsey Campbell, Wallasey, Liverpool, January 1989

RAMSEY CAMPBELL is Britain's most influential living horror writer. He is the author of several short story collections, including *Dark Companions* and *Cold Print*. His bestselling novels include *Incarnate*, *The Hungry Moon* – for which he has just won the British Fantasy Award – and *The Influence*, recently issued in paperback. As well as being president of The British Fantasy Society he is also **FEAR's** editorial associate, so we are pleased to be able to print this extract from his latest hardback horror novel, *Ancient Images*.

dragged his cuff down as if he'd exposed too much of himself to her, and widened his eyes to stop them blinking. 'How about some proof?'

When she turned her digital watch towards him, he snorted like a horse. 'Not the time. Who you are.'

She dug her credit card wallet out of her handbag and flourished it at him, staff identification card uppermost. 'All right,' he said with unexpected relish, and led her upstairs, trailing a smell of the motor oil that blackened his fingernails.

He lived one floor up. As he knocked on his door, a dull fat sound, a dog snarled and clawed at the inside of a door across the corridor. A woman with rubber bands dangling from her undecidedly coloured hair, and eyes bruised by lack of sleep, answered Trantom's knock. She gave Sandy a disinterested stare and trudged back into the kitchen, a cramped room which smelled saturated with brussels sprouts. Despite her apathy, her presence seemed welcome when Sandy heard another woman screaming in the next room.

Trantom struggled along his corridor, past a bicycle and a coat-stand with a fractured upright bandaged with insulating tape, and emitted a sound somewhere between a warning cough and a roar. The screams were drowned out by a disco beat, and a man said loudly, 'That disembowelling was a load of tripe.'

'This is good, look, where they gouge her eyes out,' a younger man said.

Trantom opened the door noisily and sidled around it, jerking his head to indicate that he wasn't by himself, not noticing that Sandy had already ventured in after him. Two men were sitting in armchairs that looked carved from cork, facing a television and video recorder. The teenager wore jeans and a T-shirt printed with the slogan I WANT YOUR BODY ('COS I'M A CANNIBAL); the man was in his thirties and might have been a businessman, dressed as he was in a dark suit and waistcoat, white shirt and black tie. 'It's

all there,' he said to Trantom. 'Here's where the one with the big tits gets them chopped off.'

Trantom jerked his head again, and the man noticed Sandy as the other did. The teenager craned to see her, his T-shirt flapping about his undernourished torso.

'That's her, is it?' he said.

Trantom stepped forward as if her nearness were forcing him into the room, and she followed him 'I'm Sandy Allan.'

'What do you reckon to this, then?' the man in the suit challenged her, pointing one gleaming shoe at the screen. All she could see was what looked like a tin of pale red paint that had just been opened to the accompaniment of the disco beat and screams: sharper details had been lost between transfers from a foreign tape. 'It does nothing for me,' she said.

'You'd censor it then, would you?'

'I can't imagine being given the option.'

'But if your lot bought it,' the teenager said, brandishing his knucky face on its wiry neck at her and narrowing his bloodshot eyes, 'you'd cut it, no question.'

'No question that it would ever be bought.'

'If the films you buy aren't that bad, why the fuck cut them?'

Wearied by the way the conversation was progressing, Sandy turned to Trantom. 'May I sit down? Then you can introduce me to your friends.'

The floor was cluttered with piles of magazines and video cassettes. Soundtrack albums were strewn across a red two-seater couch. Trantom gathered up the records clumsily, splaying his fingers almost as wide as the breadth of the covers, and dumped them beneath a shelf of plastic monsters. As Sandy sat down he dropped himself beside her, seesawing the couch. 'They write for my magazine,' he said, his voice even higher with pride. 'That's John in the T-shirt that writes our video reviews, and this is Andrew Minihi. You must have heard of him.'

"Despite her apathy, her presence seemed welcome when Sandy heard another woman screaming in the next room."

She shook her head and smiled. Minihin grunted. Trantom sniggered incredulously. John's thighs began to vibrate as if he were preparing to run laps of the cluttered room. 'You must've. A paper wanted all his books banned,' John insisted, and listed them: *The Flaying*. *The Slobbering*. *It Crawls Up You*. *It Crawls Back Up You*. *Entrails*, that they wouldn't let him call *Puke and Die*, that was the best yet.'

'I've seen them around.'

'Wondered how anyone could buy such crap, did you?' Minihin said.

The three men grinned at her as if they were watching a trap. She imagined them as three witches with Halloween hats, and felt more in control. 'Not that I remember.'

'I used to, because crap is what it is,' Minihin said, with a klaxon laugh. 'It's what you have to write to compete with films like this one here. If millions of silly bastards want to read it I'd be even stupider than they are if I didn't give it to them. Maybe some of them will grow out of it. I'm getting fan mail from ten-year-old kids.'

'Watch out, you'll have her wanting to cut your books,' John said.

Sandy lost her temper just enough to give her voice an edge. 'Do you believe everything you read in the papers? Can't you see that Stilwell wrote that about me because I dared to suggest he was wrong about the film my friend was looking for? I don't cut films, I assemble them, and I'd be a born-again archivist as far as this film is concerned. Except if everybody I approach is going to believe what Stilwell said about me I may as well not bother. Would you like to turn that down? I'm not used to having to talk over someone screaming.'

Trantom groped down the side of the couch until he found the remote control. The zombie dentist on the screen continued his work in silence, and Trantom muttered, 'What do you think, boys?'

'The paper could be after her like the other one went after Andrew. They don't like anyone who stands for horror.'

Minihin shrugged as if the question mattered as little as anything else. 'All right,' Trantom said, 'we trust you. We'll help.'

'You'll tell me what you told Graham.'

'We didn't tell him anything. He'd heard of my magazine and thought we'd know collectors who might have a copy of the film. I mean, we'll help you look.' His enthusiasm was so great that it carried him past his stammering.

'That's kind of you, but I really only wanted to find out if you had a lead,' Sandy said.

'He keeps his wife on one. What's your problem?' Minihin demanded. 'Don't you want to be associated with us?'

'You haven't seen the magazine,' Trantom said, and grabbed one from a pile behind the couch.

It was a stapled bunch of duplicated typed pages called *Gorehound*. She thought someone had spilled coffee on it, until she realized that the stain was meant to illustrate the title. 'I should have thought the film I'm looking for wouldn't do much for you after the kind of thing you watch.'

'Some films are pretty good even then,' John disagreed. 'Lugosi bursts a blind man's eardrums in *Dark Eyes of London*, and that was made before the war.'

'And in *The Black Cat* he starts ripping his skin off,' Minihin offered.

'If your film was banned it must be good,' Trantom said. 'If it's horror, we're interested. We can never get enough.'

'No fucker tells us what to do.'

Sandy wasn't sure if Minihin was talking about censorship or her. She found their enthusiasm more disturbing than their suspicion of her had been. It made the room seem smaller and hotter, and raw as the silenced carnage on the screen. 'So you can't tell

me anything about the film itself.'

'It must've upset someone,' John suggested.

'Told them something they didn't want to know,' Minihin said.

It was clear that they were only speculating. 'If there's any way you can help I'll let you know,' Sandy said, and pushed herself off the couch. 'But the people I need to meet may be as wary as you were, and they'll also be considerably older.'

The men stared at her, red-eyed from the film, from its reflection or from the way it quickened their blood. All three were between her and the door. Someone exploded on the screen, and red splashed the walls and furniture and the faces of the men, which seemed to swell like sponges. 'Turn up the sound,' John said. 'they're pulling her tongue out.'

'Tongue my arse,' Minihin disagreed. 'That's her liver.'

John clasped his knees to stop them jerking and gasped, 'Turn it up, quick, turn it up.'

Trantom rummaged on the floor for the control, and Sandy sidled past him. She was almost at the door when Minihin sprang to his feet and came after her, one pudgy hand outstretched. He was reaching to turn out the light so that they could see the image more clearly. They and the furniture appeared to be leaping to catch spurts of red from the screen. As Sandy slipped past the coat-stand and the bicycle, the woman with the bruised eyes looked out of a bedroom next to the kitchen, a baby mouthing at her breast, which was covered with scratches. The television screamed, and the woman winked heavily at Sandy. 'If it wasn't her, it might be us.'

Trantom blundered along the corridor, shouldering the coat-stand against the wall, as Sandy unchained the outer door. The dog in the flat opposite was snarling and whining. Someone must have hit it to make it sound so nervous. Sandy stepped onto linoleum the colour of mud between glistening tiled walls, and Trantom wobbled after her. 'What's that?' he stammered as if he had been about to ask her something else. 'Did you bring someone with you?'

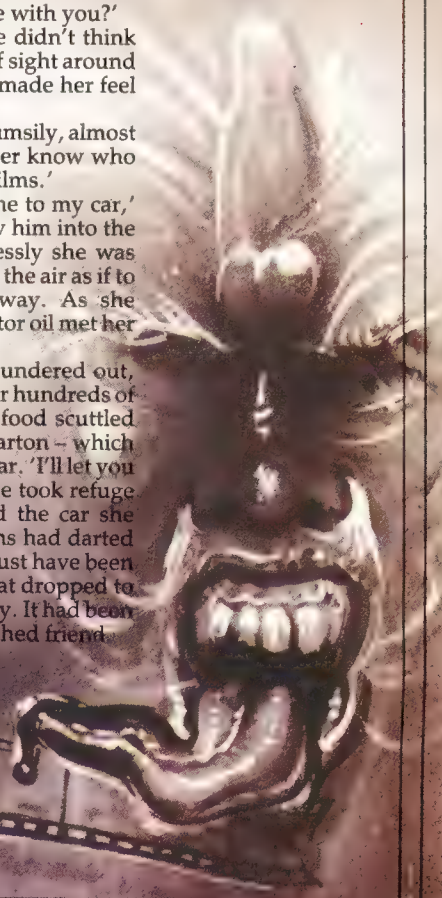
Sandy peered along the corridor. She didn't think she'd glimpsed a shadow dodging out of sight around the bend of the bare grey stairs, but he made her feel as if she had. 'Of course not,' she said.

'Got to be careful.' He stepped back clumsily, almost tripping over his ragged doormat. 'Never know who might come snooping around after my films.'

'If you were a gentleman you'd see me to my car,' said said, and gazed at him until it drew him into the open. He rushed at the stairs so recklessly she was afraid for him. He was stooping, butting the air as if to warn anyone who might get in his way. As she followed him, the smell of sweat and motor oil met her on the stairs.

He flung the street door open and blundered out, fists clenched. The street was deserted for hundreds of yards. Something that smelled of stale food scuttled behind him in the dark – a hamburger carton – which Sandy kicked aside as she made for her car. 'I'll let you know if I trace the film,' she said, and he took refuge in the building at once. As she turned the car she thought that he or one of his companions had darted out of the building to beckon to her. It must have been the shadow of a lamp post, a shadow that dropped to the ground as her headlights veered away. It had been too thin even for Trantom's undernourished friend.

"Someone exploded on the screen, and red splashed the walls and furniture and the faces of the men, which seemed to swell like sponges"

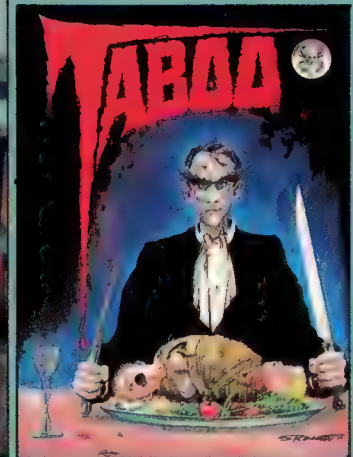


TABOO: BEYOND THE LIMITS

"There's a world of difference between an explicit, graphic story that's published in prose, and an explicit, graphic story that is drawn"



Comic books and graphic novels are again in vogue after decades in the doldrums. FEAR's Stanley Wiater asks the infamous American illustrator Stephen R. Bissette if there's anything he wouldn't include in *TABOO*, the very graphic comic book which has just scraped past British Customs officials.



Bissette with his wife and daughter and (right) Sin's Breakfast, cover of the first UK edition of *Taboo*

Stephen R. Bissette is a rarity, even among that already specialised group of people who draw and write in the comic book field. For one thing, costumed superheroes have never been his forte. Rather, he is best known on both sides of the Atlantic as a former artist for *Swamp Thing*. Beyond his artistic talents Bissette is also known in the literary horror field. Not only does he write for such cult film magazines as *Deep Red*, he has also become managing editor of the comic book/magazine *Goreshriek*. Most importantly, Bissette has greatly stretched his creative talents by becoming coeditor/publisher, with John

Totleben, of a landmark book simply entitled *Taboo* – available from Titan Books, or send £9.95 plus £2.00 postage to PO Box 442, Wilmington, Vermont 05363, USA.

Taboo attempts to break a lot of new ground in horror comics and advanced sales for this planned quarterly are triple the initial expectations. One of its earliest supporters was Clive Barker, who contributed an introduction and original artwork. It's Bissette's and Totleben's desire that *Taboo* should herald a brave new age in the medium, where the finest artists and writers in the world can come together and break all the barriers which are considered 'taboo'.

SW: The cover of *Taboo* shows an old man about to begin his supper.

However, his meal consists of two young children bound and gagged on a plate. Obviously this publication is meant for those with strong stomachs; but where did the idea for this entire project originate?

SB: It originated out of John Totleben's and my disenchantment with the current state of horror in comics. There was one point, in 1983, when we were working together on *Swamp Thing* and it was the only horror comic on the news stands. In the direct sales, there was an anthology called *Twisted Tales* and a few others, but none of them were doing much that was memorable. Even *Twisted Tales*, which was a class act all the way, was committed to emulating the EC Comics style of the Fifties, and we felt that was a dead end.

"I can't understand how putting an image on a piece of paper – or a theatre screen – is in and of itself dangerous or unhealthy. It's just an expression of the self"

This was the Eighties, and there were other ways of telling stories, and other stories to tell. And we didn't see comics doing what was being done by all the other media in horror. In written horror, it was reaching new heights in the early Eighties in film, there was more and more coming out that had an edge to it, transcending what had become old-hat. But we didn't see anyone doing this in comics, and that was the impetus in putting together *Taboo*.

SW: Give us some examples of the controversial material you have in store for readers.

SB: First, let me say that about a third of the issue measures up to what our goal was; we haven't broken through all the barriers yet. I would cite *Throat Sprockets*, by Mike Hoffman and Tim Lucas, as a very good example of an adult horror comic short story. It's about a man who's looking for



Page One of *Throat Sprockets*

alternatives to his own sexuality, and he finds them in the most unexpected of places; a grind-house porno theatre. It works on a very sophisticated level; the story does not condescend to the reader. It pulls you into the character's obsession and addresses it very directly.

SW: Your contribution, *Cottonmouth*, does not seem publishable without an 18 rating.

SB: That's also an adult story, in the sense that you have to have a certain amount of knowledge and sophistication to sort out what the story is about, since there are no visual clues. Basically, the plot is about toxic shock, and yet we tell the story without ever saying the words 'toxic shock', or ever showing a woman's tampon. The entire impact of the story is dependent on the reader putting in the missing pieces.

But to answer your question,



Toxic shock in *Cottonmouth*, with Bissette's own story and illustrations

'What makes this an adult horror comic?' as well as why *do* a horror comic, the best example is *Chigger and the Man*, by Keith Giffen and Robert Loren Fleming. This is a story that could *only* work in comics. It could not be told as a written story and have the same impact, because its entire impact is dependent on its juxtaposing these drawings done by a child, with the artist's vision of this character's reality.

Nor would it work as a film. Because as soon as you're dealing with something other than what is drawn on a page, the child's drawing juxtaposed with the artist's more representational drawings ceases to mean anything. I would point to *Chigger* as a key example of what we're trying to do in *Taboo*. In many ways, it's the strongest story in the book. It's disturbing to even look at, and I'm going to close the book right now so we can continue.

ASSAULT WITH INTENT

SW: By the nature of your themes, you seem to be asking for trouble with the censors.

SB: It's one thing to deal with people who are used to writing often very explicit and very graphic stories. Yet there's a world of difference between an explicit, graphic story that's published in prose, and an explicit, graphic story that is *drawn*. A bookstore that would tolerate carrying the complete works of Clive Barker, might just toss us out on our ear because in the works of Clive

Barker, you have to sit down and read and interact with your imagination. But in *Taboo*, you just flip through the book and you get an assault!

I didn't see this as a problem when we started out, but I'm discovering that most of the artists and writers in the field do pre-censor. It's like we all have a little safety valve in our minds that goes off if we even think we're going too far with something we're creating, and pull back. The only pre-censoring we've done ourselves is that there was a short period when John and I were deluged with submissions dealing specifically with sex and violence. On one level this fits our intent, but John and I realised that if *Taboo* was made up mostly of these kinds of stories it would eventually make for a very dull book.

But in terms of future issues, I do have to be concerned with censors. One example that comes to mind is S. Clay Wilson. As I say in my introduction, he is one of the most notorious of the underground comic book artists. If the underground comics were intended as an assault on the mass media, and the middle-class in particular, then Wilson was the demolition man. With the first line of his pen on paper, he's just loading explosives into your mind and blowing it to kingdom come. The illustration in question is S. Clay Wilson's fourth plate, which is a really obscene piece that we deliberated over quite a bit. It shows the victim of a rape. She's dead, and the two rapists, one of whom is this old fellow, are standing over her with visible erections.

SW: This would be considered in many countries to be obscene material.

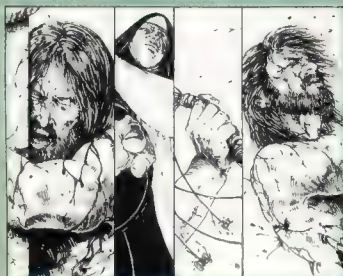
SB: I know. I have to wrestle with the problem of how to keep *Taboo* true to its name, and still get it into a country like England or into parts of Canada where showing an erection is flat out illegal. Even though these are just pen and ink drawings! My attitude has always been, anything that's on paper can't hurt you. It's just an imagined image. Now, I'm not saying there's no responsibility or no impact on the viewer. Of course there is. Why else would I be doing this book if I didn't think it had some kind of impact? But as someone who does drawings for a living I can't understand how putting an image on a piece of paper – or a theatre screen – is in and of itself dangerous or unhealthy. It's just an expression of the self.

SW: Nevertheless, how do you publish something called *Taboo* and still remain true to your vision?

SB: My plan right now is to have a regular edition of *Taboo* which is

complete and uncensored, and then in future issues to have a UK edition as well. For example, I'm going to ask S. Clay to do another plate for the British edition to replace the original. However, the American edition will have both illustrations, so the American readers will get to see everything for the book in *Taboo 2* that Wilson has done. The British edition will be missing that plate and any other material which might have to be modified.

To me this is *absurd*. I have to do it, otherwise I won't get the book through customs. I'm worried right now about this first issue. What do I do if the 1,600 copies that Titan Books ordered are seized and destroyed at the border? Who absorbs the loss? Is Titan responsible? Is it my risk? In a practical business sense, those are very sticky issues to deal with. And let me stress that even if certain images are replaced in foreign editions, *Taboo* is still a very tough book. I'm not trying to play censor, and I'm very uncomfortable with even what I'm detailing to you. Let me make it clear that I would *never*



Coming shortly in *Taboo* issue two, Michael Zulli's *Mercy*

censor any writer or artist. But as a publisher, I have to think of getting the book out to as many people as I can, and balance that with my being the artist whose responsibility it is to be as uninhibited and clear and honest with my imagination as I can be.

THE RIGHT STUFF

SW: What kind of feedback are you getting from other writers and artists?

SB: We have interest in the book from people like Douglas E. Winter, Harlan Ellison . . . Chet Williamson has

already sent us a script, from which Tim Truman is drawing. Michael McDowell sent us a script called *Oyster Boy* that we're hoping director Tim Burton will eventually illustrate. Ramsey Campbell has expressed interest. Frank Miller is finishing a story for us. Richard Corben is considering doing something for us.

Another way of answering your question is to say that I'm not only trying to reach top-drawer comic book professionals who write and draw comics, but also the top writers of horror fiction. I'd even like to interest the people who work in horror films. I'm putting out the invitation, and I hope it all works out. *Taboo* is really the first publication to wed creative personalities in all the related horror fields with original projects. The best from one medium working with the best of another — no holds barred.

SW: Clive Barker has been supportive of this project for some time, hasn't he?

SB: Clive's been nothing but helpful. Originally, he was to write and draw a story, but his film commitments have delayed that, though hopefully that will still happen. Clive's unique in that he's the only horror author who is an accomplished illustrator and writer. Not to mention playwright, screenwriter, and director! But I for one would like to see what he could do in the comic book medium. The potential of this medium is limitless, and I'm convinced we've only just begun to scratch the surface. One reason for this in America is because it's always been straight-jacketed and narrowly perceived as a business run strictly for the entertainment of children.

SW: Rumour has it you're working with Barker on some other project.

SB: I was approached by two comic book publishers and asked if I wanted to adapt a Clive Barker story. But there's really one story of his that I would love to draw and that's *Rawhead Rex*. Well, Steve Niles at Arcane Comics went out and obtained the comic book rights. It'll probably be out late next year or early 1990.

OBSESSIONS

SW: It strikes me as a bit unusual that you're one of the few comic book artists/writers who achieved your success without being heavily involved with the usual superheroes. You've always been dedicated to horror, apparently right from the start of your career.

SB: True, this is where my interest has always been. I've been working professionally in comics since 1977, and in all that time I stuck with my obsession to do horror stories. I

mean, I've done a number of war stories, but if you look closely at them, they're really horror stories. [laughs] And I've done fantasy tales, but if you look at my fantasy tales they're horror-fantasies! The only real superheroes I ever did were of course in *Swamp Thing*.

SW: What were your influences as a child? Were you always hooked on comics?

SB: For me it wasn't really comics. When I was a kid growing up in Burlington, Vermont, there were a few horror titles from Marvel Comics that made an impression. But two that really made an impression were by John Stanley. The first was *Ghost Stories* which continued as a series, though Stanley only wrote and drew issue number one, and a big, fat, annual called *Tales from the Tomb* that Dell put out in 1962. He did stories which were genuinely scary.

But for me it was more the movies. The first three films I can remember were *Beast from 20,000 Fathoms*, which fed and fuelled my obsession with dinosaurs, which lasts til this day. The Alexander Korda version of *Thief of Bagdad* which has one of the most horrific giant spider scenes in the history of film and *Them*, which turns into a giant bug movie, but starts off as a very dark and scary film. They were seminal films for me. So I think it was more the films than the comics which steered me in this direction. As I got a little older I also read Ray Bradbury and

H.P. Lovecraft, like so many horror writers today have done. And Richard Matheson was an enormous influence on me when I was a kid. **SW:** Richard Matheson also wrote many of the best episodes of the *Twilight Zone* television series in the late Fifties and early Sixties. There was quite a bit of horror on television back then.

SB: I was eight years old when *Twilight Zone*, *Thriller*, *Way Out*, and *Outer Limits* were on the air. I distinctly remember seeing two episodes of *Way Out*, and being terrified by that show! In fact, my mother forbade me to watch *Outer Limits* after a while because I would get too wound up [laughs]. And there were magazines like *Famous Monsters of Filmland* and toys like the Aurora monster models . . . that was really a fertile time to be growing up and being in love with horror. And it seems to me that the Eighties are just as fertile. I'm happy to be a part of it.

Coming Soon: Stephen Bissette's first short story. Exclusively in *FEAR*!

I'm not only trying to reach top-drawer comic book professionals who write and draw comics, but also the top writers of horror fiction.

MORTUARY



HIS SUMMER... THE BALL IS BACK! So screamed the American ads for *Phantasm II* along with a huge picture of a scowling Angus Scrimm as the Tall Man and

the famous flying sphere of death from the first movie.

It's no wonder that Universal Pictures felt the need to give audiences' memories a jolt as it's been almost ten years since Michael Pearson and the sinister Tall Man first battled each other within the confines of Morningside Mortuary. When one considers the impact that the low-budget hit *Phantasm* had back in 1979, it's a surprise that Don Coscarelli, director of the original, hasn't developed a sequel earlier. There's been no shortage of genre fans screaming for it.

'I guess I never really had a fix on how to do a sequel before,' says Coscarelli. 'A couple of years ago I was watching another sequel and I thought 'Well, what if we just started it up again - exactly from where we left off?' The original had a questionable ending anyway so it lent itself perfectly to a sequel. We were able to pick the plot up the minute after the first film ended.'

'It was a lot more fun to create and easier to write this time. I'd watched the first one with a lot of different audiences and I got a feeling for what worked and what didn't. There was a lot of pressure in one way as a lot of people really like the first one and I didn't want to disappoint them.'

In the ten years between the *Phantasm* movies, Coscarelli has completed two films - *The Beastmaster* and *Survival Quest* - and spent one-and-a-half years on *Silver Bullet*, the ill-fated adaptation of Stephen King's *Cycle of the Werewolf*.

'Dino [De Laurentis] and I had creative differences which was a shame as it could have been a wonderful picture - I loved the book. I wrote a couple of other screenplays in the intervening years but I couldn't get them financed. I think I priced myself out of the market budget-wise.'

"Sam Raimi recommended Mark Shostrom to me after *Evil Dead II*, which is really a text book on make-up effects"



David Cox braves sinister mockish midgets, a mad mortician, and a vampiric silver ball to talk EXCLUSIVELY to Don Coscarelli, director of Guild Pictures' PHANTASM II

EFFECTS ON A SHOSTROM

The budget for *Phantasm II*, however, far exceeded the paltry sum needed to put the original together. The result of the budget increase is all on screen too - the sequel boasts fabulous atmospheric mortuary sets and a whole mess of bizarre special effects and pyrotechnics.

'The extra money meant we were able to do much more in the make-up and mechanical effects departments. However, as we know, that doesn't necessarily mean a better picture - it just makes it more convenient for me. We were still on a modest budget by most standards anyway.'

To help in the realisation of the bizarre horror fantasy, Coscarelli enlisted Mark Shostrom, the talented special effects artist best known for his work on *Evil Dead II* and *Nightmare on Elm Street III* and who is currently finishing post-

production on the underwater monster movie *Deep Star Six*.

'I met Mark through Sam Raimi who recommended him to me after *Evil Dead II* which is really a text book on make-up effects. He was very creative and his guys were very enthusiastic. Mark and I had sort of a wish-list of things we wanted to do but it was really a function of the budget how much could actually be done. We went through the original screenplay and budgeted the effects and found it came to about three or four times what we had available.'

'The other thing you've got to remember with a film like this is that you can't go too far overboard with your ideas or you won't get the proper rating.'

However restrained Coscarelli and Shostrom tried to be it obviously wasn't good enough for the MPAA as *Phantasm II* had to trim some of its gore content to avoid the dreaded X certificate.

'We always have trouble, but I feel we deserve more of a break as the *Phantasm* pictures aren't very

MEMORIES



one scene where the priest looks at him and says something like 'You must be the Devil Himself', and Angus had about three or four lines he wanted to try out like 'No, he's just a poor relation' or something. I tried to restrain him but he just went ahead and did it. We cut them out anyway.'

FUTURE UNCERTAIN

Coscarelli and Scrimm have stayed very close friends over the years. Scrimm has mainly been keeping himself busy doing a few small film roles and writing liner notes for albums – his notes for classical albums won him a Grammy. However, when Coscarelli approached him with the idea of reprising his role he jumped at the chance – which is just as well.

'I don't think it would have been possible to have gone ahead without Angus. He created something unique and was one of the real high points of the first picture.'

'He's very game about doing the stunt work as well. He's getting older now but I think we only doubled him in a couple of stunts. We had to use a stand-in on some of the driving scenes because his driving's really not that hot. We wouldn't want to endanger the rest of the cast!'

Phantasm II got quite a prestigious release in the US, going nationwide in the summer of 1988. It was an unprecedented move by distributor Universal Pictures but, unfortunately, the gamble didn't really pay off as the movie posted less than average box-office returns. Perhaps Coscarelli's flight of dark fantasy was too confusing or troubling for the typical summer audience – the sequel certainly doesn't hold any pat plot resolutions or offer any easy explanation of just what in the hell is going on with all those mutant midgets and blood-sucking spheres.

'I don't think a third film would clear up the whole plot. If it was too direct I think it would lose a lot of its charm. There's a chance that we'll do a *Phantasm II* – depending on how the second one fares on video and in Europe. We might try one next year but I can guarantee you it'll either happen in the next year or two or it won't happen at all.'

I, for one, am hoping that it won't be long before Don Coscarelli and the Tall Man are back to haunt the mortuaries of our minds as soon as possible. I can see those posters going up now – THE BALL IS BACK . . . AGAIN!

realistic. They're pure fantasy – I mean, all the characters that really get ripped up aren't just evil, normally they're not even human. I don't feel that the rating system is applied fairly. The major studio productions can get away with a lot more while they come down on independent pictures much harder. That said, I was happy with the way the film turned out – we got away with quite a lot.'

TALL AND POPULAR

In the years since the first film was unleashed the genre has seen a whole slew of horror comedies where any horror content is immediately emasculated by excessive comedy relief. *Phantasm II* doesn't apologise for being scary as so many recent horror movies have – it has a bleak, Gothic atmosphere and contains much dark and troubling imagery – and the change in trend is most welcome.

'It didn't seem much darker to me although when I showed it to

Angus (Scrimm) he said 'Oh, this is a very grim little film', so I don't know – maybe I'm just getting older or something.'

'Universal didn't put any pressure on me to turn the Tall Man into a Freddy-figure at all. It would have been horrible to have to turn him into a cartoon character. He isn't really something you can monkey with too much because audiences really love him. In all the research screenings, Angus always got the highest scores.'

Along with the silver sphere, the Tall Man is the one thing that most people remember about *Phantasm*. That menacing bellow of 'BOYYYYY!' is scarier in itself than any number of lousy Freddy Krueger dream sequences put together and Coscarelli has done nothing to lessen the fright factor of Angus Scrimm's towering performance as the ultimate bogeyman.

'I always try to keep things pretty straightforward but sometimes Angus would try and throw in some kind of quip or other. There's

"I don't feel the rating system is applied fairly. The major studio productions get away with more while they come down on independent pictures much harder"



FIRST PAST THE POST

The post production period of a film can be more exhausting than the shooting schedule. In the last of his series of articles on film-making, John Gilbert discovers that long nights, thousands of feet of film plus the constant worry of reshooting, timing, and classification add to the strain on director, producer and film editor.

"Only editing can save a bad film from being worse"

Film editors cavort at the centre of a vortex of celluloid during shooting and the post production stage of a movie. The job sounds simple by definition – but it's not simple in

reality. The editor effectively ties a knot in all the processes we've discussed during this series, taking vision and sound and putting them together so the film flows smoothly. If the editor gets it wrong critics and the more discerning of audiences are quick to punish.

So vital is the editor's role that it has often been said that only editing can save a bad film from being worse.

QUICK CHANGE ARTIST

The editing process begins during filming. Camera film goes to the lab every night, the negative developed and a low-grade colour

(sometimes black and white) 'rush' print is made. First thing in the morning, the editor and assistant 'synch' these rush prints to the live recorded sound, and the result is watched by the director to see if everything went well.

Since directors always shoot the same scene several times over for safety and quality, the editor takes notes about which part of which scene – and which camera angle – will be the best to use in the final cut.

These rushes now become the cutting copy and are logged by printing ink serial numbers at six-inch intervals along their edges so the assistant can always find a particular scene or take very quickly – a typical production can easily run to hundreds of thousands of feet, so it's an important task!

Once the main filming is over, under the director's guidelines, the editor starts cutting the scenes together, resulting in what is called a roughcut – a blocked-in version of what will become the final film. Editors have the original shooting script to go by, but it often changes during editing if certain sequences are cut due demands of time, rewrites or censorship.

At the outset a script suggests a running time. Low-budget features are often around 80 or 90 minutes

while blockbusters may go on for 124 minutes or more. The first roughcut, however, is likely to be a good 10-20% longer than intended. Editing, or film cutting as it is more commonly referred to, is an artistic process of constantly refining.

However, much of the editing process relies on the quality of the script and the director. If one shot doesn't already flow well into another no amount of editing will make the cuts work smoothly. But the editor works in smaller units than scenes. Each small camera angle is viewed through the Steenbeck table (see side panel), snipped, trimmed, bits replaced again until each shot moves logically into another according to the script.

Assembled scenes may flow much better when paced up much faster than originally conceived. This pace, which must relate to the film as a whole, only becomes apparent as more of the film is assembled, and as a result a lot of tightening up happens between the roughcut and a finished cut.

Even the finished cut may not be final. It's subjected to intensive viewing by director and editor both on the Steenbeck and in viewing theatres, and numerous minor adjustments might be made until finally everyone pronounces themselves satisfied – that's the 'fine cut'.

The director may also want to add or cut sequences and it's the editor's job to accommodate changes within the film's body. Some scenes which looked good in

the script or during rushes may not work within the context of the film. Those can either be cut out completely or the director may decide to reshoot if the problem is a small one.

Reshooting's a headache though: special effects may have to be recreated on a smaller budget and time scale, cast members may not be available while some costumes, special make-up and sets have been destroyed or dismantled. Directors under such pressures have been known to rewrite and reshoot using doubles or even just the limbs of doubles.

SOUND AND SYNCHRONISATION

So far the only sound used in editing has been whatever 'live' sound was recorded on set. Cost is the factor which determines whether or not this survives into the final film version. Recording dialogue in a set of fifty odd technicians with all that equipment is not easy. If the camera is tracked during a shot, inevitably the sound recordists pick up the creak of the dolly's wheels and technicians' footfalls. Outdoors may be worse – in a Victorian gothic thriller you certainly don't want to hear aircraft and low-grade traffic noise on the recording. Avoiding extraneous sound costs lots.

The answer is to post-synch dialogue. The editor's assistant makes up loops of film which are then run in a dubbing theatre while the actors redo their lines attempting to match voice to lip movements seen on screen. Again, in a typical production this can add up to thousands of loops. Once done, all the dialogue soundtracks are spliced together. But that's only the voices . . .

The main dub can only be done after a finecut is achieved and all the post-synching is complete. A film's final soundtrack may be made up of twenty to thirty individual effects at any one moment. Soundtrack laying is an art in itself, often calling for a specialist called a dubbing editor. The dubbing editor watches each reel of the film, takes notes and then goes to find all the sound effects needed. These may come from a library source, the original live recording or specially recorded by the dubbing editor.

Some effects such as footsteps have to be recorded using the post-synch method. And there are specialists in the field. Their work is best known in radio serials providing footsteps, hoof beats and doors opening. It's a highly skilled business because doing anything normally, such as walking or running, is almost impossible when done consciously

– you try it. The materials used may not always be obvious either. For those walking through leaves sound, try unspooling a mile of old quarter-inch recording tape and scuffing through that!

Some of this work has been taken over by new technology sound synthesis which can create noises as simple as a cat's miaow to a full-stage rock concert and crowd. Horror and science fiction films have greatly benefitted from computer sound techniques because a synthesizer can manipulate sounds, reverse them, change pitch and hide their true nature.

THE BIG BEAT

The musical soundtrack is also affected by the cut of a movie. The composer's job is done in several segments. First there's the script to read, perhaps a video reel showing some sequences to give the film's atmosphere. Next comes a series of key themes to be discussed with the director and editor. Finally the full-blown score. Once again, together with the editor, dubbing editor and director, it's into the dubbing/recording studio with musicians to post-synch sequences of music to film loops so that the 'stings' all come exactly on the intended cuts between shots.

Music accomplishes mood and theme. It should appeal to a viewer's subconscious, highlighting what's happening on the screen while not drawing attention to itself as a separate entity – unless that's the desired effect. You may, for instance, be scoring a comedy horror movie in which you want to use as many horror soundtrack clichés – loud, vibrating organs, for instance! – in order to make the audience additionally receptive to the humour. You don't, however, want people to laugh during a real horror movie, so the music is often quiet and only begins to gather pace when the audience is asked by the film-maker to expect a fright. Even then some composers have deliberately kept a low-key theme running right up to the moment of the scare to give it extra effect.

PUTTING IT TOGETHER

The final stage of a film's post production life is the dubbing theatre. Here, reel by reel, the film is run through together with the numerous individual, overlapping sound effects, dialogue tracks and music and blended together by a the dubbing mixer who sits at a massive console in control of all the soundtracks. The process is nicknamed rock 'n' roll because as a mistake is made, or the director

asks for a particular sound to be louder, the mixer stops the film, rolls back, then rolls forward again resetting all the balances before switching into record mode just before the error occurred. It takes days to do a whole feature film.

All that remains is to send the fine cut to the lab so the negative can be cut and finished prints made. Here, too, post production opticals are cut in instead of the approximations made by the editor in the cutting copy. As we've discussed in earlier issues, these include special effects and title sequences, often made by independent companies hired to do the job. Title styles reflect their age. During the late Seventies/early Eighties the style was one of animation and great creative flourishes. Movie-makers have since found that simple, bold titles, light on dark, tend to add power to a movie rather than any fancy art work.

BIG BAD WORLD

Once the editor's finished, the film completed and director and producer are happy, it's shown to the distributor. Sentence is passed and if they're lucky it goes direct to the BBFC for screening and certification.

Such things are for a perfect world, however, and there are a number of changes distributors can impose on films. They can, for instance, ask for a number of minutes to be cut – they might even take the film away and do the job themselves, often resulting in loss of face and picture. They can also ask for scenes which they think will not get past the BBFC to be cut.

The BBFC also has a wide ranging influence on films. If they think your film won't make it into the 18 certificate category they can ask you to make cuts – they can also recommend that you don't bother resubmitting, though that doesn't happen often. If you want to a 15 or PG certificate and you've been given an 18 you can reapply but usually you'll have to decide what you should take out of the film – the BBFC isn't a creative charity.

Once you have the certificate the distributor can arrange press screenings and look for a release slot. As the film market becomes more clogged so the number of such slots has decreased – particularly during holiday periods and for that reason the time between completion and release can be as much as a year. Still, at least you know it's out there, not on video, and, to some extent, it's yours!

Coming soon: A series of profiles on independent special effects companies and their work

Film editing equipment Simple, on the whole: a room with racks for all the film cans, a table with rewind arms, two cloth-lined holes for film to unwind into, and between them a picture synchroniser. This is a hand- or motor-wound device with several sprocket drives to carry the sound (which has been transferred onto magnetic-coated film) physically locked in synch with the picture head at the front of the machine. Film is cut with a splicer which uses adhesive tape to join sections to each other. The splice is made between frames. Tape's used because it's easy to unpeel to replace unwanted cuts as changes are made. All film offcuts – or 'trims' – are carefully filed in case they're wanted again.

To see and hear the film in better conditions, the editor uses a Steenbeck table. It looks like a giant flatbed version of an old spool-to-spool tape recorder. The film runs from side to side on flat plates, through a viewing head which projects the picture up onto a large back-projection screen, while sound tracks run on one or two further heads from similar flat plates. Cutting can take place here as well as on the synch bench.

The finished cutting copy is usually a mess of tape splices and editors' chinagraph pencil marks. At the lab, however, the original negative is in pristine condition and can eventually be cut to match all the intended cuts in the cutting copy. From the neg, the theatrical prints are made.

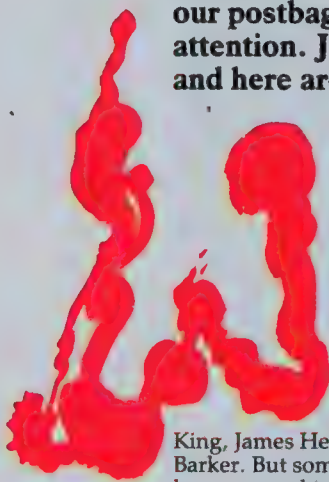


MASTER BEHIND THE MIRROR

"Two things inspired [*The Manitou*]. One was the fact that Wiescka was pregnant, the other was the *Buffalo Bill Annual* of 1956"



Graham Masterton is a fixture of most high street horror bookshelves yet few people have ever seen a photo of him. Is he British or American, married or single? Those and other questions are, according to our postbag, what you're dyin' to know. So pay attention. John Fraser has finally tracked him down and here are the answers.



orldwide sales of 30-plus novels, now numbered in their millions, should make

Graham Masterton's name as instantly recognisable as those of Stephen

King, James Herbert and Clive Barker. But somehow Masterton has managed to remain one of those rare animals: a best-selling author whose profile is still low enough to render him practically invisible.

In the rash of countrywide promotion tours and primetime chatshow appearances which are currently the norm for publicity conscious writers, the modest Mr Masterton is conspicuous by his absence, preferring to let his books

speak for themselves.

It could be, however, that all that is about to change. 'It seems that somewhere along the line my readers have got the impression that I'm a fat, bald, heavy-smoking 55-year-old,' he explains genially. And, being a tall, athletic fellow who looks much younger than his 42 years, Masterton is understandably keen to put the record straight.

Having said that, the author of such classic chillers as *The Pariah*, *The Devils of D-Day*, *The Heirloom* and *The Wells of Hell* is still more at home in front of a keyboard than a camera, alternately creating thrillers and blockbusters with apparently enviable ease.

The son of an army officer, Graham Masterton was born in Edinburgh in 1946. By his own admission, he soon grew to

become 'a completely typical schoolboy of the Fifties, from my grey flannel shorts to my short back-and-sides'. It is interesting to note, however, that even before he had entered his teens he had become the proud author of an unpublished 400-page vampire story. Very significant!

FROM MAYFAIR TO ...

This ability – and enthusiasm – to write was to stand him in good stead when his first job, as a trainee reporter, eventually led to his editorship of the mens' magazine *Mayfair*, and from there, *Penthouse*. Lofty heights indeed for a 27-year-old.

Although he had written two unpublished novels during the Sixties, and a successful pair of humorous 'how to' sex books in his capacity as editor of *Penthouse*, at no time did Masterton feel any real desire to become a novelist. After marriage to his wife Wiescka (who was later to become his literary agent), however, he quit the magazine business and plunged into fulltime writing.

'Because those first two 'how to' books had been so successful in America, I really believed I could make a fortune at turning out more

Graham Masterton

Charnel House



of the same,' he admits.

But that proved not to be the case. When the bottom fell out of the sex book market (his expression not mine) in 1974, he submitted a short horror novel he'd written in two weeks to his US publisher, Pinnacle Books. The novel, about the rebirth of an evil Red Indian shaman into present-day New York, was called *The Manitou*.

'Two things inspired the book,' Masterton later recalled. 'One was the fact that Wiescka was pregnant at the time. The other was the *Buffalo Bill Annual* of 1956.'

Masterton's continued fascination for 'hideous and supernatural events which visit themselves upon ordinary, down-at-heel characters' was never more in evidence than here. *The Manitou* proved to be an instant winner which was made even more successful when the late William Girdler's movie adaptation, starring Tony Curtis, Susan Strasberg and Michael Ansara, became one of the surprise hits of 1978.

... TO CHARNEL HOUSE

Masterton is the first to admit that he was swept along by his own sudden success. 'Oh yes. After *The Manitou* I found myself publishing one new horror novel every six months, and it was all happening so fast that I never really had time to go back and rewrite or come to understand all the nuances of what I was doing.'

Considering that those early novels – *The Djinn*, *A Mile Before Morning* (also known as *Fireflash Five*), *Plague* and *The Sphinx* were the products of his 'apprenticeship', they still read remarkably well, and highlight not only Masterton's vivid and varied imagination, but also his very distinctive writing style and use of often witty dialogue to add credibility to even the most outlandish scene. Another early title, his 1978 chiller *Charnel House*, was so highly regarded that it won a special Edgar (Wallace) award.

Despite the success, Masterton had no intention of remaining a one-genre author, which is one of the reasons he has remained so difficult to classify.

In 1979 he published a highly acclaimed political thriller entitled *The Sweetman Curve*. That same year saw the first of his epic sagas, *Rich*, which, while not boasting a single demon or reanimated corpse, became another instant success.

Horror has, however, continued to work its influence over him. In 1980 he penned an adaptation of the Paul Michael Glaser movie *Phobia* and a curious mixture of

political and supernatural thriller, *The Hell Candidate*, under the pseudonym of Thomas Luke. The name was dragged out again for 1984's *Condor*.

Under his own name, top-notch historical sagas such as *Railroad*, *Solitaire*, *Corroboree*, *Maiden Voyage* and *Silver* have punctuated an equally impressive flow of horror novels, all of which have enjoyed immense popularity.

'The sagas, I suppose, represent my mainstream fiction,' Masterton admits. 'The idea behind them is to recreate specific periods of history in such a way that the reader eventually comes to feel that he or she has actually lived through them.'

The intense and exhaustive research required for these mammoth projects is something on which Graham thrives. In preparing to write *Ikon*, another political thriller set in the Sixties, he travelled to Washington, Los Angeles and Arizona to interview, first-hand, some of the people involved in events at the time. Similarly, for his preliminary work on *Lady of Fortune*, the story of the wheelings and dealings of a worldwide financial empire, he visited a top-security London bank vault to rifle through more than a half million pounds, 'just to get the feel of handling huge sums of money'.

FAMILY PORTRAITS

When not writing or researching, Graham enjoys cooking, art, politics, and law. He's a skilled underwater swimmer and, according to Ramsey Campbell's *New Terrors*, even collects rare umbrellas!

Free time these days is, however, at a premium, for while Graham, Wiescka and their three sons, Roland, Daniel, and Luke have their permanent base in a smart country house on Epsom Downs, Surrey, much of their time is also split between California and Florida.

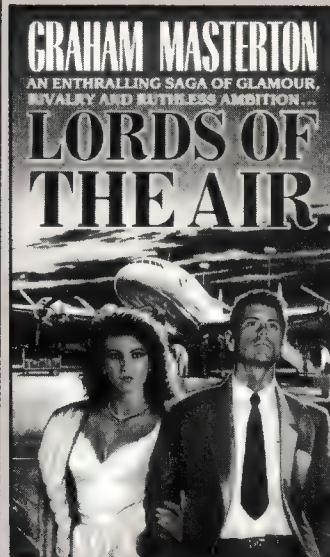
Yet, all that travelling in no way seems to inhibit the prolific Masterton. On the contrary, he has produced some of his finest work

in the past few years, as evidenced by the West Coast Review of Books's silver medal which he won for *Tengu* (1983) and the Best Horror Novel of 1987 nomination which he received for *Night Warriors*.

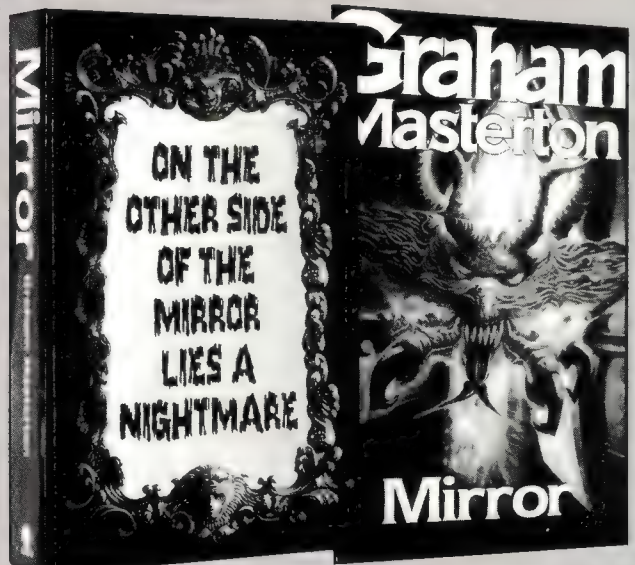
As for the future, he certainly can't be accused of slowing down. The evidence is there in the recent publication of his latest books, a 487-page aviation story called *Lords of the Air* (Hamish Hamilton), and a new tale of terror called simply *Mirror* (Sphere). Also, look out for his forthcoming horror novel *Ritual*, an illustrated fantasy novel, and an ambitious new blockbuster set in Curzon's India.

Furthermore, if plans to film *Revenge of the Manitou* and *Family Portrait* come to fruition – work on the film version of *Charnel House* is already reportedly underway in Australia – Graham Masterton's profile may yet rise high enough to afford his many admirers a long-awaited glimpse of this 'unknown', but nonetheless undisputed, master of horror.

"After *The Manitou* I found myself publishing one new horror novel every six months"



The two sides of Graham Masterton: lust and luxury in *Lords of the Air* and a nightmare vision in *Mirror* (double cover shown)





THE ILLUS

At 69, Ray Bradbury, one of the world's most admired fantasy writers, is still as prolific as ever. In part two of our exclusive FEAR interview, Pete Crowther asks the questions.

Part one of our interview with Ray Bradbury covered his childhood, early influences and the series of happy accidents that eventually led him to publishing his first short stories in New York magazines and his brushes with the 'pulp'. In part two, Bradbury talks more about his current work and his involvement with television and the cinema.

PC: Would you ever do a sequel to *Something Wicked*, or maybe a follow-up?

RB: No, I think that contains itself pretty well and I wouldn't want to, well not unless it happened. If it should suddenly hit me some night, like this new book I'm working on is the sequel to *Death is a Lonely Business*. Same characters, but a somewhat different locale. I got the idea going to France on the QEII three years ago; I encountered a man on board whose face was so horribly destroyed, either by genetics or by an accident, that when I saw him I burst into tears. I couldn't believe that a man could walk through the world looking as he looked and not kill himself. He haunted me. When I arrived in Paris, I got out my typewriter and for ten nights I wrote 150 pages of a new novel based on my encounter with that man with the strange face – and I still don't know who he is.

PC: Have you got a title for the book?

RB: Yes, right now it's called *The Dead Ride Fast*.

PC: In terms of written output you don't seem to be as prolific as you used to be.

PC: You just haven't seen a lot of my work recently – 18 scripts for TV is prolific. I've just finished this new book of short stories. Now I'm finishing this novel, and I'm finishing a book on John Huston (and *Moby Dick*) and my experiences with him. Then I'm finishing a 500-page book on Ireland and I have another book of poetry ready and then I have a reprint of *The Hallowe'en Tree* coming out again this

fall . . . and what else? I've got an opera opening in Vienna in November . . .

PC: Okay . . . okay . . .

RB: Well, you had to ask!

PC: Okay, consider me smacked in the mouth! Tell me about the opera.

RB: It's *Fahrenheit 451*. I've been working on that for several years, that opens in eight weeks here. I did it as a drama here in LA six years ago and got wonderful reviews. Turning it into an opera has been wonderful fun, so, it's still at the centre of my life. Then I've got an Irish play that opened here in LA recently; very fine reviews. So I've been very active in the theatre for the last four or five years too.

SHORT ISN'T READ

PC: Looking back at the novels – all your past work generally – do you have a favourite?

RB: I think *Something Wicked this Way Comes*, and then *Death is a Lonely Business*. That's the great favourite for me now, because it is so different . . . and so very personal. My other books are not that personal. Most of my short stories are metaphorical fantasies of one kind or another so I'm only in there as a creator of ideas, not as a person, whereas in my murder mystery, I'm there at the centre. That is me. Those are my characteristics. These are my habits and the people surrounding me all behave the way they behaved when they were alive. That's why I love to go back and read it because it summons up my own life.

PC: What made you do all the short story collections . . . what about *Dandelion Wine*, which is a beautiful book. I don't know whether you'd call it a short story collection or a novel.

RB: We tricked it out to look like a novel.

It was a quiet morning, the town covered over with darkness and at ease in bed. Summer gathered in the weather, the wind had the proper touch, the breathing of the world was long and warm and slow. You



TRATOR MAN

PART II

had only to rise, lean from your window, and know that this indeed was the first real time of freedom and living, this was the first morning of summer.

Dandelion Wine

PC: It flows absolutely perfectly. Is a lot of that from your own recollections?

RB: Oh yes. Word associations. You start with dandelions and grass and clover and fireflies and cellars and attics and the next thing you know it all comes back. And over a period of ten years you finish a book you don't even know you're finishing. Everything has to be a surprise. You mustn't know what you're doing until it's done, and then you look at it, like... well, that's how *The Martian Chronicles* got written. I didn't know I was writing a novel, I just did a series of stories and the editor at Doubleday pointed out the relationships to me and I said 'I'll be damned, yes'. So I sat down and wrote an outline and sold it to Doubleday that night.

PC: So what about *The Illustrated Man*. What made you bring all those stories together like that?

RB: Again, that was Doubleday. They said 'Look, short stories don't sell. Is there some way you can semi-connect the stories?' And so I came up with the framework. *The Illustrated Man* was obvious. You put all of the stories on his body and then one by one they come alive. That was enough of a frame to sell the book to get people into it, then in spite of themselves, they say 'Well it's a book of short stories, but I'll read it anyway'.

PC: And whose idea was it to collect together *R* is for *Rocket*, *S* is for *Space*?

RB: The children's books, yeah. It was a stupid thing to do. But that's the way librarians are, they're all stupid. Editors are stupid. My books belong to children as well as to grown-ups. They don't have to put a special label on them, but they wanted a special label because librarians wouldn't put them on the shelves without the label and booksellers wouldn't buy it and put it in their children's book section without the label. So that's how those two stupid books got edited. I was against it. I fought it. But they said 'Look, do you want the kids to read you or don't you?' I said 'Yes I do', and they said 'Well, is it going to hurt?' and I said 'Well, no, it isn't really going to hurt, but I just think it's idiotic'.

NO FUN KILLS

PC: Let's talk about the television shows and how come the most obvious vehicle for your stuff, which I think was *Twilight Zone*, only got one Bradbury piece on it?

RB: I had more than that. In fact, there's one unacknowledged one by a friend of mine. George Clayton Johnson did an adaptation of *Death and the Maiden* with Robert Redford and Diana Cooper. And I wasn't given credit. I never sued but it was there. The first programme on the *Twilight Zone*—the pilot script—was based on a story of mine out of *The Martian Chronicles*.

PC: What did you think of *The Martian Chronicles* TV series?

RB: Oh, not good. They were boring. Not bad, just boring. The director didn't have any fun, did he? I wasn't involved in that. I was kept out at first. They pretended to have me involved but you see, they take notes. I come to the office, I criticise the script or a scene that they show me and they say 'Oh listen to what Ray has said here, oh isn't he wonderful... write that down, write that down'. And then when I leave, they tear up their notes.

PC: Does that happen with the movies?

RB: No, because I have more control. Although I had some trouble with *Something Wicked this Way Comes*. Jack Clayton, my director, had the screenplay rewritten behind my back, using John Mortimer over there in London. Well, John Mortimer doesn't know anything about fantasy and he's the wrong person, I mean he's great for *Brideshead Revisited*, and things like that, he's terrific. But, you know, *Something Wicked* requires a lifelong dedication and knowledge as to how to make a fantasy work. He ruined the script and it all had to be taken out after we'd finished the film. ♡ Disney spent \$5 million reshooting about one-fourth of the film because of Clayton's tampering with it.

Midnight then and the town clocks chiming on toward one and two and then three in the deep morning and the peals of the great clocks shaking dust off old toys in high attics and shedding silver off old mirrors in yet higher attics and stirring up dreams about clocks in all the beds where children slept.

Will heard it.

Muffled away in the prairie

lands, the chuffing of an engine, the slow-following dragon-glide of a train!

Something Wicked this Way Comes

I'm very proud of it, though, because I fought for it and I edited the last reel myself. They couldn't solve the last reel, there was something wrong with it. It made people laugh and they were ready to quit and just cut the hell out of it and release it. I said 'No, no, let's keep the editor on an extra week because I'll pay for him. I think it's important enough to keep him on. I'll make up a chart of 20, 25, 30 shots and the way I think it should be laid out, and we'll see if we can eliminate the laughter'. And by gosh, I made up the chart, laid it out for him and it worked. So I managed to save the end of the film.

PASSAGE TO THE PAST

PC: what about films like *Fahrenheit 451* and *Illustrated Man*?

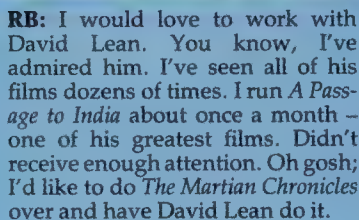
RB: Parts of *Fahrenheit 451* are different from my novel, but nevertheless, it has a wonderful mood to it and the last reel is one of the most evocative reels I've ever seen, it's one of the great endings. You can name four or five films in the last 50 years with great endings: *Citizen Kane*, *Sunset Boulevard*, *Some Like it Hot* and *Fahrenheit 451*. It sticks in your mind, all the book people wandering in the forests... and the gorgeous score by Bernard Herman.

The Illustrated Man was no good. Because the script was was actually done being my back completely! I was never shown a script. I thought I was being treated well by the studio and then I discovered the script had been written by a real-estate man from New Jersey who sold it to them behind my back. They came to me, not telling me about its existence, offered to buy the book and I said I would let them if I could control the casting. So they picked Rod Steiger and his wife. I knew both of them, admired them, and I thought I was on safe ground. When the film began I discovered the dreadful script had been circulated, unbeknown to me. They paid me off alright—I got my money but that's not the point.

PC: Who would you like to see directing your stuff now, and what would you like to see?

"Almost anyone's better than those dreadful New York writers. They've been sold to us by New York intellectuals, writers who are competent but my God, they're boring"





The rocket lay on the launching field, blowing out pink clouds of fire and oven heat. The rocket stood in the cold winter morning, making summer with every breath of its mighty exhausts. The rocket made climates, and summer lay for a brief moment upon the land . . .

The Martian Chronicles

PC: The most obvious one now for filming, of course, seems to be *Death is a Lonely Business*.

RB: I have an offer from a British director who's in television. He does television commercials. He sent me all his commercials, and they're brilliant. But I'm awfully wary of handing over a property to someone who's only directed one-minute commercials, no matter how good they are. It doesn't prove you can integrate. A film is a mysterious thing and it's a miracle that any film works. All the glue that has to go into it, all the different elements—and you get one element wrong and the whole thing goes out the window.

PC: Have you ever been tempted to get involved with the comics industry again?

RB: Well, I am. DC Comics put out a new book of mine recently – *Frost and Fire* – and, of course, I'd love to have my own Sunday page, a full page. But that's impossible because the way they sell comics now. They cram everything into small spaces, and what you need is the full page *Tarzan* used to have 50 years ago, or *Prince Valiant* had when I was 17 and collected them. But those days are pretty well gone and your comic

pages, the dailies, are all, my God, they cram 30 onto two pages. They're so small that a lot of the fun is eliminated.

PC: What do you think to the new school of horror and science fiction writers? People like Stephen King and so on.

RB: King and I know each other. We've corresponded, and I gather I'm his honorary poppa. He tells me I influenced him to begin his career. I haven't read that much of his. A lot of the films, of course, that have been made are too horrific. They're not horror films at all. They're slaughter films. Films like the [Texas] *Chainsaw Massacre*, and parts of *The Omen* – where they cut off the guy's head, and have it roll down the street – it's not necessary. I don't like that.

PC: I remember reading your introduction to Harlan Ellison's *Shatterday*, in which you said: 'Phillip Roth, Saul Bellow, Norman Mailer move over, Harlan Ellison is a better story writer than you'll ever be'. Do you still feel that?

RB: Almost anyone's better than those dreadful boring New York writers. They're really . . . come on! They've been sold to us by the New York publicity people and New York publishing houses, the New York intellectuals. Very narrow village, there, of writers who are competent but my God, they're boring. And who cares about the problems of a middle-aged man going through the male menopause, who can't decide whether to go back to his wife, his mistress or his boyfriend? I mean, it's all so repetitive and worrying over the littlest titbits of things in life. I far prefer the field we work in, where we have imagination to go on.

PC: What about limited editions, how do you feel about those?

RB: I've got two new ones coming out this fall. Eastern Press is doing *Something Wicked this Way Comes* and *Dandelion Wine* and they're going to be very handsome. My artist friend Jo Mughani is doing two special paintings, one for each book up front and they're beautiful, beautiful work. The limited edition of *The Martian Chronicles* that came out ten years or so ago, illustrated by Mughani is beautiful, it's exciting. And the *Fahrenheit 451* that came out, even more so. Very, very handsome. I never counted on it. You see, this is what I mean when I say life should be surprising. I never thought for a moment in my life that I would have three or four books that would be considered classics and would go into those editions and be part of people's libraries. This is a wonderful extra gift.



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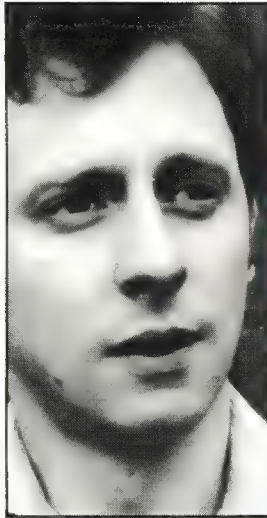
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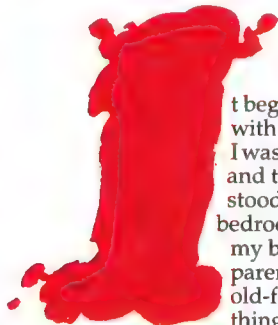
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SCIENCE FICTION



AGE OF UNREASON

The wary and imaginative child within all of us is the fear novelist's best friend and the key to writing dark fantasy. Stephen Laws tackles the problem of reader involvement in the second installment in his series on horror writing.



I began, I think, with the wardrobe. I was five years old and the wardrobe stood in the family bedroom, between my bed and my parent's bed. A big old-fashioned thing with battered

suitcases on the top and rows of clothes hanging inside, smelling of mysterious perfume. But it was the two round decorated handles on the front that began my acquaintance with Fear. Because I knew that they weren't handles at all.

They were eyes.

During the day, the wardrobe looked just like a wardrobe; a cunning trick to fool the grown-ups. But in the night, I knew, the wardrobe was alive. The orange light from the street lamp outside shone through the net curtains of the bedroom window directly onto the wardrobe's face. And I could see those eyes staring at me in the night as I lay alone. If I hid under the blanket away from those eyes it was worse. Because then, I might hear the *thump-thump-thump* of the wardrobe on the carpet as it edged towards my bed.

That was my first direct relationship with an unreasoning Fear. Only when my father finally wrapped a towel around those knobs, making the wardrobe blind, so that it couldn't see where I was, did I sleep easier.

Strange, isn't it? I can still remember the terror. If you've read *Ghost Train*, you'll know that the wardrobe makes its appearance there in the nightmares of the little girl, Helen. And writing about that wardrobe somehow got it out of my system, all those years later.

THROUGH THE BARRIER INTO THE PIT

Now, picture another scene. It's 1960. And it's night in slum city. There are dark grumblings in the

sky, and a dirty rain is falling. Dirty black water swirls in the street's gutters, chasing empty cigarette packets and other urban debris into the gobbling teeth of greedy drains. An eight-year-old boy stands on the rain-washed, neon-splashed pavement outside a dilapidated fleapit cinema. Hands thrust deep into anorak pockets, he stares up at the poster displayed outside the box-office. He's oblivious to everything else, even the hostile staring of the woman behind the box-office window.

It's the poster for Hammer Films' *Brides of Dracula*. The boy's heard of Hammer Films, of course. He's listened in awe to the blow-by-blow retelling of the stories of the films by the big kids at school who've managed to bluff their way past the 16-only X-certificate barrier. And now he goggles in true dread at the cadaverous and horribly feral David Peel (Baron Meinster) swooping down upon the helpless heroine – and also in awe and admiration of the fearless vampire hunter, Peter Cushing (Van Helsing). He would give anything to be able to see that film.

The boy, of course, was me. And somehow, it was a pivotal turning point. Swamped by feelings of spine-tingling excitement, dread, danger, horrifying adventure and hero worship (Cushing, of course), I began to write my own stories of supernatural terror to make up for the fact that I was denied access to the cinema. So, for everyone who wants to know how and when I became interested in the genre, that was it (fuelled also by the BBC television showing of the truly scary – for then – *Quatermass and the Pit*).

Many years later, that cinema – The Imperial – Haunted Palace of Byker, became the central location for my novel, *Spectre*.

So why am I taking you back all those years? Well, it's because these first encounters of Fear are still so tremendously vivid in my mind. Oh yes, I remember lots of

good things in my youth, good feelings, good times. But with a fuzziness borne of time and distance, whereas these memories of supernatural fear are imprinted on my mind with vivid clarity.

BE PREPARED

It's easy now for me as an adult to see occurrences in their real light. An asthmatic child, lying in the dark, struggling with feelings of suffocation, the smell of those perfumed clothes in the wardrobe lying heavily on his chest, could easily create night terrors about that wardrobe, particularly a child with an overactive imagination. And identifying with an intellectual, physically slight professor of parapsychology who could leap over banquet tables with the athleticism of Douglas Fairbanks and take on the horrifying Prince of The Undead himself with such bravery and faith was easy. Now, there was someone who could face up to Night Terrors and vanquish them; someone really worthy of hero worship.

Peter Cushing knew that there were monsters, despite the poo-pooing of those around him (who invariably became victims of the monsters themselves because of their disbelief). As Leslie Halliwell says, Peter Cushing 'deals firmly with monsters of all kinds.' Cushing grappled with Fear, confronted it, and with breathtaking resourcefulness, overcame it. So, when grown-ups poo-pooed my belief that the wardrobe was alive, I knew better.

Back then, you see, I knew that the wardrobe was a monster. I also knew that out in the backyard of our house at night, down the pitch black stone passage that led to the outside toilet, *something* was waiting for me if I dared venture out. Something that I didn't want to see. I knew what the grown-ups said was wrong about there being nothing in the dark. Either they didn't know or . . . worse . . . perhaps they were just saying that to stop me worrying. So, I learned to be prepared.

Now, of course, I realise that kids like me were, and are, more in tune with things in the dark, after all. Yet grown-ups still do things like sleep with the passage light on, keep their feet in bed in case something underneath reaches up and grabs their ankle, and won't leave coats hanging on bedroom doors because they look like lurking strangers in the dark. So . . .

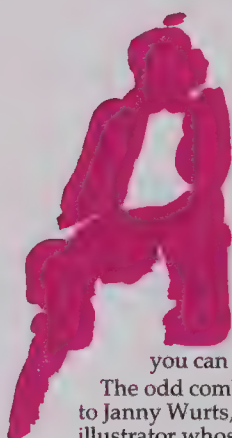
Laws of Fear Number One:

Keep your eyes on that wardrobe

Laws of Fear Number Two: If it moves, send for Peter Cushing

SOLO FLIG

Janny Wurts' introduction onto the British fantasy book scene was as collaborator with Raymond E. Feist on *Daughter of the Empire*. Her first solo SF saga, *Sorcerer's Legacy*, is due for publication in February and, as John Gilbert discovers, it's likely to boost this remarkable lady's name into the bestseller lists yet again.



stronomy, art and creative writing may seem an odd combination of curricula to most British college students, but in America, the land of opportunity, you can mix and match.

The odd combination appealed to Janny Wurts, F&SF writer and illustrator whose collaborative work with Raymond Feist on *Daughter of the Empire* (Grafton) is already known in Britain and whose solo novels, *Sorcerer's Legacy* and *Storm Warden* are about to be released in Britain (again by Grafton). 'I was too much like a kid in a candy store, I couldn't choose. I did it in three years. I had to decide and I chose the illustration and writing because I didn't have to give up anything. So I could continue to be as scatterbrain about my hobbies as I wanted.'

And the astronomy? 'I was lab assistant with the college astronomy department. I was running telescopes. I was their hired technician and spare research person. I found out that the guy who was the technician pointing the telescope for the great scientist had more fun, in a way, than the scientist, who had to wait months for a short amount of time on one of the major telescopes and then spent the rest of his time juggling physics and figures. I thought I'd have more fun as a technician and – rather than be a technician and go nowhere – why not keep it as a serious hobby.'

Science became a passion during Janny's college years, and accounts for her interest in SF, but it was during childhood that her love of fantasy developed. 'When I was very small I used to read a lot of fairy tales, books and books and

books of them. They fascinated me. And the drawings were an escape from the very dry subjects in school – I used to doodle.'

Her desire to become an artist and illustrator grew as she visited art museums in her late teens. 'I got very enthusiastic about this, but I got enthusiastic about a lot of things at that age. But it did kind of stick that wouldn't it be nice to be able to write and illustrate. So I decided then that that was going to be a part of my life.'

CULTURE CLASH

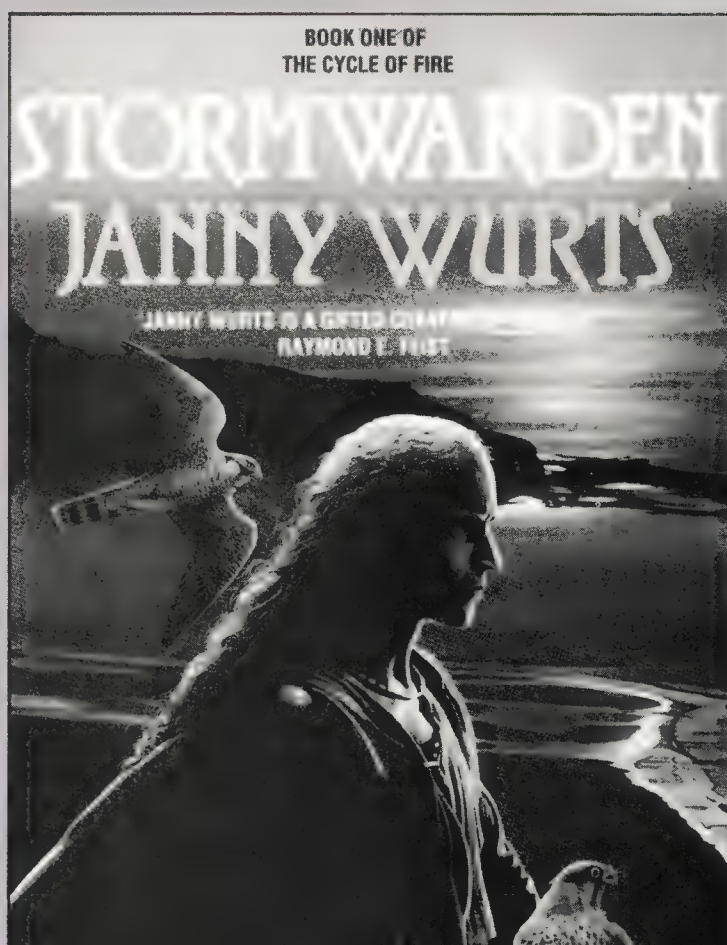
Janny's early appetite for fairy tales has not had a direct effect on the contents of her novels. 'The fairy tales and the Tolkienesque kind of fantasy are more what I call the classic type of fantasy, where you have good versus evil and very little differentiation. One is one, the other is the other in a classical confrontation, whereas I like to look at good and evil more as a point of view.'

'If you asked Khomeini if he was evil he'd say no, he's doing what he's doing and I'm sure he believes it's fully right. So, it's all dictated by a point of view.'

Point of view and characterisation are important within Janny's work and she feels that, in some respects, the state of society has dictated the evolution of fantasy writing from the heroic 'clash and bash' sub-genre (which is now more the province of role playing games) to the intricacies of deep character drama. 'We're living in a very impersonal world.

"As they grow up, people become more closed in and more stifled. I think that fantasy writers don't"

Cover of Janny Wurts' book with artwork by Geoff Taylor



HT

So, what is it that readers want? They want that contact, they want characters who can give them that contact. Fantasy or no, I think it's just part of life.'

Janny also believes that fantasy writers are those whose imaginations have survived the transition from childhood to adulthood, and who can see beyond the small part of the world in which they live and the relatively few people with whom they interact. 'As they grow up, people become more closed in and more stifled. I think that fantasy writers don't.

'Now, never having held a nine-to-five job – I've always freelanced – I've always gone my own way. Very few times have I had to stop what I was doing in my life because somebody told me to. Most times I've found an alternative. So I think maybe that makes a difference in my outlook. I've always been able to choose. If someone said to me 'You can't do this' I would say either 'Why not?' or 'What's the way round it?'

She feels that a child's imagination can be stifled by parents, although some people are less susceptible to that sort of well intentioned grounding in reality than others. 'How many writers have you talked to who were stifled by their parents, and they'd stifled it so hard that people turned into writers anyway. If it's there it'll come out.

'In my case, I come from a lot of brothers and sisters – there are five of us. None of us was fantasy oriented and my parents looked at the career I chose sideways and said 'Fine, if you can do it and you're sure about it'. They didn't say 'No, you shouldn't do this', they didn't say 'By all means, that's the way to get rich and famous', and I think, again, it's a matter that you have to choose for yourself.'

When Janny left college she met with resistance to her fantasy writing and illustrating objectives because they were not compatible with accepted publishing practice. 'There really wasn't anyone doing paperbacks for adults: there was childrens' fiction all over the place. So I started out doing graphic design and worked my way up. But it did enable me to earn a fairly good freelance living.

In the meantime, I worked on my writing and I did my paintings and took them to conventions and

that's where I developed a market for my paintings.'

FREELANCE FIRST

At no time did Janny ever give in to the accepted view that after college you get a job and then work towards going freelance – a view prevalent in Britain. 'How many people do you know who said 'Well, I set off after college and I intended to . . . and here I am at 45 and I'm still selling insurance?'

She did, however, take a short stay job after college. 'I took a job teaching riding that provided me with room and board for four months. I worked horses and that gave me a lump of money with which I bought a car. Then I rented a garage-garret apartment on the property of a writer and I worked freelance as a paste-up artist. For a while I was getting up at 6am and mucking horse stalls, because it

gave me grocery money. But it kept me freelance, kept my time free, and, yeah, the first years were very hard until I had that first novel complete enough to send out.'

It took five years for that first novel, *Sorcerer's Legacy* to appear, along with her first paperback cover illustration, and she believes herself lucky that her first major completed work was picked up so quickly. 'It's a court intrigue story with which people who have read *Daughter* will be familiar. It's about a heroine who's got to dig herself out of a big mountain of trouble. In fact, it's that book which caused Ray Feist to ask me to collaborate with him, both because of the female character and because of the court intrigue and the intricate plot and counter plot. The trilogy started out as two books, but my American publisher wished the second book to be split down into two to make it a trilogy so I had to

"You can't control what people are doing on the streets. What you can decide is that you wouldn't do that yourself"



rewrite, and I really struggled to make all the books stand by themselves.

'That book centres around three gifted children who are put into positions of power and responsibility and about how they handle this. One of them handles things in what our society would consider to be the less desirable way.'

Again, the complex character development within Janny's books parallels the swing from the great, but somewhat stereotypical Good and Evil wars within the books of JRR Tolkien with the diversity of human motives which are shown by today's psychology. 'The choices today are more complex. How can you tell what's right and what's wrong. There's this big debate going on in the States right now, should they legalise drugs. What a horrible thing, to legalise drugs. On the other hand, it would take the criminal out of the drugs scene. And the terror and the stabbings and the things that are happening on the streets would be gone because people wouldn't have to steal to afford the illegal drugs. So, is it right, or is it wrong?'

'I find that things are getting greyer and it's harder to choose. The evil and good delineation aside, it all comes back to the individual. You can't control what people are doing on the streets. What you can decide is that you wouldn't do that yourself. If everyone did for themselves and said 'I won't shoot somebody', who would do it? So modern fiction does centre more on the individual because, in the end, that's all you can change.'

CONCEPTION

Janny's collaboration with Raymond Feist on *Daughter of the Empire* (see issue 4) came about through an odd combination of circumstances. Illustrator Don Mates produced a publicity poster for one of Feist's books and told Janny that it was a good book. 'Two years later, at a fantasy convention, I came screeching into a room where the last party of the convention was going on, looking for the person who was supposed to give me a ride back to where I was staying. And I couldn't find them: they were gone. So I was worried, to say the least, because I didn't have enough money in my pocket to get a cab.'

She sat down with Don Mates, who introduced her to Raymond Feist. 'We talked maybe five minutes and in my agitated state I don't remember much. Ray ended up sending me a copy of his book. I sent him a copy of mine just to read. He read it and saw elements in it. At the time he had had the

idea for *Daughter of the Empire*, he had a beginning and an ending but no middle. In addition, he had hinted at a very complex social organisation and political set up in this empire, but he didn't know how it worked.

'He realised this was a book that he wanted to write but he didn't feel quite up to doing it all himself. Plus – the female lead – he was nervous about that.'

At first Janny was nervous about a collaboration but agreed to help him if he needed ideas. She eventually became intrigued with the concept and collaborated on a very tight outline for the book. 'It was an idea that I wouldn't have done on my own and I like challenges. I said, 'This will be a different book if I collaborate with Ray on it. It will be something more.' And I think one of the things Ray uses in his Riftwar saga is the vast difference in the cultures. He wanted a difference that is vast and another mind to make it richer.

One of the reasons Feist wanted Janny's collaboration was because he did not think he could do justice to the female lead character, Mara, and that he would encounter the problems most male writers have in creating woman characters.

'Men are brought up not to show feelings, not to value feelings. So you get a writer like Michener. His characters are very cold; you never really know what they're thinking but in place of that he gives you huge amounts of detail and you can interpret those characters in the detail you're given.

'Women tend to focus much more on inner feelings, the inner emotions, but they're permitted to do this. Men have these feelings too but women are not restricted in showing them and I think that's one reason why women have a bit of an edge.'

THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

The Riftwar books, *Daughter of the Empire*, and Janny's own trilogy, contain a lot of magical technology and SF-type explanations for the events but, as she says, they're woven into the background so as not to put fantasy readers off the novels. 'There is a science fictionish base to that that world and the set up of the culture; you have a confrontation between aliens who have psychic awareness and are decimating humanity, and then you have the humans trying to find a way to escape their fate. 'The basic background for my trilogy is a world where a probe ship designed to find a solution to these problems crashes and the people retreat into a mythological,

religious society. It reads as a fantasy but, as the three books progress, you see the whole picture behind it without detracting from the fantasy atmosphere.'

Despite the inclusion in her book of SF and fantasy, which she sees as two different paths of development, Janny is not interested in the classification debate, which suggests that a certain type of reader only reads a certain type of book. 'I look on it as my job to write the best possible book I can. If in picking up these books the readers choose to cut themselves off from something because of a prejudice, that's their loss.'



She sees the problem as a traditional one in which the hard scientist feels threatened by the fantastist and vice versa. 'If the guys crunching numbers and saying everything in the universe is explainable are handed something that they truly can't explain, it panics them – and vice versa. If the person who makes their living reading palms has to do computers for a living they're going to panic too. So, the two extremes are incomprehensible to one another.'

As Janny's solo books are published in Britain she will be teaming up with Raymond Feist yet again to produce the next two Empire books. 'We know where the heroine is going. As you can deduce from the end of *Daughter*, she's going to get more powerful enemies, enemies allying with enemies. She's got to come to terms with the amount of power that she has and reconcile that with her female side. Sooner or later she'll have to make a choice.'

And how does Janny feel about the fame which she has started to achieve in Britain? 'People say 'Well how do you feel to be on the bestseller lists in Britain' and I say that I try not to take it too seriously. If I did, that might become my goal. And the minute that becomes your goal then you lose track of what it is that got you there. So to my mind the safest thing isn't to insulate myself from it but to keep it in a very, very, separate compartment from the one that the ideas come from.'

Wurts' artwork for *Deadly Power*, the role playing game

"She's got to come to terms with the amount of power that she has and reconcile that with her female side"



PIECES OF HATE

Was Jack the Ripper a madman – or woman – whose only ambition was to destroy the lives of ladies of the street? Did he hack his victims to bits because of some perverse hatred? Was he from outer space or some other more terrestrial time? As Kim Newman points out in the second part of his Ripper filmography, the theoretical nuggets have best been explored on film and video.

Jack, el Destripador de Londres
[*Jack, the Scourge of London*]
Spain 1971

d **Jose Luis Madrid**

Paul Naschy, Patrician Loran, Renzo Marignano

Sources are somewhat confused here. The *Aurum Film Encyclopaedia* describes it as a modern-set thriller with a mysterious character copying the Ripper's methods by slicing up Soho prostitutes, and suspect Paul Naschy finally stabbing the real villain, who turns out to be one of the coppers on the case. In his book *Psychos*, John McCarty claims it's yet another Sherlock Holmes pastiche with the sleuth on the trail of the Ripper (in a plot borrowed from *The Sign of Four*) and dressing up as a harlot to lure the mad surgeon into the open.

The Ruling Class

UK 1972

d **Peter Medak**

Peter O'Toole, Alistair Sim, Michael Bryant, William Mervyn, James Villiers

Extravagant black comedy from Peter Barnes' play about the 14th Earl of Gurney (O'Toole), a mad peer who believes he's Jesus Christ and goes around outraging his class by preaching love and kindness and the redistribution of wealth. He's cured of his delusions by taking on the identity of Jack the Ripper.

From Beyond the Grave

UK 1973

d **George Fenady**

Ray Milland, Broderick Crawford, Elsa Lanchester, Maurice Evans, Louis Hayward, John Carradine
Is the figure of the Ripper in a London wax museum coming to life? Or is it one of the many old-time actors assembled by Fenady to people this hokey but sort-of-lovable film? The villain's identity isn't revealed until the epilogue in which the museum unveils a statue of him committing his first murder.

The Groove Room What the Swedish Butler Saw

US/Sweden/Denmark 1974

d **Vernon P Becker**

Sue Longhurst, Ole Soltoft, Diana Dors

3-D sex film (?) set in Victorian London, concerning a young man who tries to further his sexual experience with a mechanised seduction chamber. The Ripper (Martin Ljung) is hiding in his house, but spends more of his time leering and slobbering at chubbily nude continental sex kittens than sharpening his scalpels.

Le Nosferat ou les Eaux Glacees du Calcul Egoiste

Belgium 1974

d **Maurice Rabinowicz**

Veronique Peynet, Maïte Nahyr, Martine Bertrand

Pretentious art film combining the figures of the Ripper and Nosferatu in an attempt to show that Germanic morbidity and class oppression leads inevitably to Fascism.

A Knife for the Ladies

US 1975

d **Larry Spengler**

Jack Elam, Ruth Roman, Gene Evans

Western with Elam as a crusty old

WINTER'S APPROACHING MILLENNIUM

Douglas E. Winter, American horror critic, author and lawyer, talks to FEAR's Philip Nutman about his criteria for reviewing fiction, the emergence of Splatterpunk, new talent, and Anti-horror



most perceptive critic. A winner of the World Fantasy Award, he is also a writer and editor, and, recently published what may be considered the most important anthology for the Nineties.

As a writer, Winter's short fiction has appeared in over half-a-dozen anthologies, and his criticism regularly appears in *The Washington Post*. Three books also carry his byline: *Stephen King: The Art of Darkness*, *Shadowings: A Reader's Guide to Horror Fiction*, and *Faces of Fear*, an excellent collection of detailed interviews with the genre's leading practitioners. During 1988, Winter collaborated with Charles L. Grant on a novel, *From Parts Unknown*, which will hopefully be published later this year.

FLEEING THE COOP

PN: What are your critical criteria for horror fiction?

DEW: There are no simple criteria but consistently I find that it is the emotional power of the work of fiction that ultimately determines whether or not it succeeds for me. I've said several times in print that the best horror is fiction, whatever the label, that has the power to disturb. That power is not necessarily about the shock or the scare but about digging inside you. Most of the time it's like a fish hook; it's very sharp, grabs you and holds you. But sometimes it's very subtle, like a paper cut you don't feel at the moment it happens but its sting grows with time.

I don't sit down with stories any longer and say 'disturb me'. That isn't the reason I read. But those stories that succeed in affecting my emotion are those that I tend most often to call the best in horror fiction.

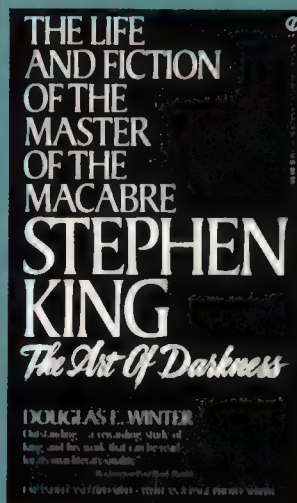
Horror fiction, whatever its entertainment value, provides a dark mirror to everyday life. Though most critics dismiss it as nonsense, there are a few intelligent minds who

feel it is one of the most important literary genres, worthy of the kind of critical analysis reserved for 'serious' fiction: one of those people is Douglas E. Winter.

Author Robert R. McCammon says 'Horror writing is the fundamental literature of humanity'. Whilst Winter agrees with this, he is wary of making such a pointed statement. 'I don't hold horror fiction as the be all and end all means of expressing the human condition. There are, however, certain aspects of the

human condition that can only be explored through horror fiction.'

Douglas E. Winter is the field's





PN: There appear to be many different perceptions of what horror is. Some people think a work of fiction is only horror if it deals with the supernatural or psycho killers. So your definition of horror is any work of fiction that probes the dark side.

DEW: Precisely. There is no limiting factor on the subject matter of the story. I have found horror in the most peculiar places.

PN: Hence the analogy you use in your introduction to *Prime Evil* where you quote Justice Potter Stewart's remark 'I know obscenity when I see it'. It's not so much a case of trying to confine it within a certain set of limits, it's identifying it wherever you find it.

DEW: Absolutely. I like to say that the contemporary realm of horror fiction runs from the accepted members of the genre – Stephen King, James Herbert, Peter Straub, etc – to key writers in what we call mainstream contemporary literature, to supermarket tabloids, which often are nothing more than a kind of horror fiction. I'm very wary of pigeon-holing things. I don't like to be asked for my ten favourite horror novels or films, I don't like to write pieces concerned with my personal favourites; that ties you to certain limits. And similarly it's true about one's criteria. You can often find an impeccable-written piece of fiction that doesn't deliver any of the emotional factors I've described, yet because of its craft achieves high marks. You have to be open, or thought becomes rigid, one's responses become limited. I try to approach each piece of fiction that I'm asked to review afresh, you have to ignore all the reading you've done before, and pose the question: what does this piece of fiction do for me on its own? Without trying to look at it in standard terms; how does it work? Why does it work?

PLEASURE KILLER

PN: Criticism can become very short-sighted and as you say, our responses can become limited if we adopt specific criteria within the range of certain generic parameters.

DEW: Sure. The emotional response must remain fresh. Yet obviously you need some kind of structural guidelines. At the same time a lot of them are, I believe, very instinctual – as I feel creative works should be approached on their own terms, and instinct gives you that ability to see beyond.

For example, a real dichotomy can occur in film. You can see a movie that's absolutely dreadful in terms of plot, imagery, the competence of its actors, special effects, etc, and at the same time

there may be something there that makes it worthy of consideration. Here I'm thinking of Lucio Fulci's films. Fulci is someone who seems constantly to do that for me. On one level his movies are absolutely dreadful, *Zombie Flesh Eaters*, *The New York Ripper* for example, but they fascinate me because he is doing something regardless of the quality.

PN: Moving on. Keats once wrote 'We murder to dissect'. Have you found being a critic has killed some of your pleasure as a reader?

DEW: Certainly. I read constantly. After a while you get a feeling there's a certain level of discovery that's missing; you're not as wide-eyed and naive about the limits of fiction as you once were. I think there is a definite tendency to read not only critically but with, let's mix metaphors, a sense of being backstage at the ballet. The more you learn as a writer about the mechanics of writing, the more you come to recognise those mechanics at work; so often the sense of wonder shifts somewhat to become an appreciation of the writer's skill. I've also found I don't read as much horror fiction as I once did. There's no denying the fact that the quantity of horror fiction has increased without a commensurate increase in the quality, which has something to do with it.

LOOKING FOR MR X

PN: What are your feelings about the state of the field?

DEW: I seriously doubt whether all of those writers out there are writers of horror fiction because it means something to them; they are writers writing horror fiction because it is commercial, it sells and there's a market for it.

That's a separate point in one respect, but I'm very optimistic about horror fiction. Every couple of years, since the mid-Seventies, we've heard that horror fiction is going to die, that publishers are disinterested, that the phenomenon can only live for a certain time. Then there's a resurgence and you begin to feel cycles are revolving. Cycles are readily explicable in publishing terms because the business is always looking backwards not forwards.

Today publishers are preparing books that aren't about the Nineties, they are books about the fiction of 1986 or so. Publishers are already looking for the new Clive Barker when in fact they should be looking for the new Mr X. They should be looking for someone whose fiction should be fresh, new and original. Horror is the most consistent fiction. There have been times when it has ebbed in popularity, but it has never

disappeared entirely. And it won't. Particularly with the close of the decade, with an approaching millennium, in a time when we are bombarded with terror, real terror. Horror fiction is probably in the best position it has been in for a hundred years, if not in its history. I refuse to join those people who say the time is nigh and it will go away.

PN: What about Splatterpunk and the field's young guns?

DEW: Splatterpunk has brought in, over the last couple of years, an energy, a vitality, and a fresh, irreverent perspective. Writers like John Skipp and Craig Spector, and David Schow display a genuine love of the form and a sincere desire to 'kick against the pricks', to rub up against certain traditional elements, but what they are doing doesn't seem to me to concern itself with altering some of the fundamentals of the form. The volume of the content may be loud but the form itself is not radical.

PN: Which brings us to the question of what you term 'Anti-horror', which you feel is the cutting edge of the genre.

DEW: Yes. But I'm not saying it's a clique or a school. I'm identifying a thread for readers of horror fiction, a reason why certain writers are having tremendous appeal at this moment in time. That's not to say there are people whose work, every aspect of it, can fit into a definition. Again, pigeon-holing is abhorrent to me.

PN: When did you identify this?

DEW: For years I've been wrestling with the notion of conservatism in horror fiction; the notion of horror is more often than not about putting things right. Traditional horror fiction is about conformity. It's about an external force intruding into everyday life, being confronted, beaten; with a subsequent return to the status quo. But also with a kind of *Friday the 13th* tagline, 'yes but wait until next time'.

Those stories, however well-written, have never appealed to me because they seemed ultimately to be a way of limiting. When I thought about the difference between the types of fiction and film that opened my imagination with new possibilities, there was a recognition that this fiction is not about putting things right. All of us have grown up with this notion of horror, the paradigm I've just outlined; that is the horror genre. And it's not about chaos, it's about the imposition of order.

The term 'Anti-horror' came to me as one that's intended to suggest there's fiction that runs counter to this traditional paradigm. There's fiction that looks at the notion of order as horror.

I have been
looking for
the new Mr X
for years. I
don't think
it's going to
be a new
genre, but
a new
perspective
on the genre.
I think it's
the future of
horror fiction.



Just because Christmas is behind us doesn't mean you can't be irritable and bitchy – at least not for *The Spook*, as she draws claws on Philip Nutman, Fleet Street and Dame Edna Everage



he jolly season is over and done, but I've often wondered what workers in the fantasy, horror, and SF fields get up to during the cold months between one year and the next. I finally that a little covert investigation was in order. And though spying on your friends is a tough and dirty job, I decided my first duty was to you, dear reader, who must be in need of a good laugh after all that Yuletide log.

Philip Nutman ventured off to the States again in November, though he wasn't hard to track down in his glorious beach house just outside New York. *Hellraiser*'s **Peter Atkins** was also in similar – though hopefully sunnier – climes during a trip to wrap up the details of *Hell on Earth*, while **Clive Barker** was hot on his heels finishing the casting for the *Nightbreed* movie.

Hellraiser's associated actors weren't 'resting' either. Can you imagine what a Cenobite might do for Christmas? What else but go into pantomime. Yes, I tracked down **Nicholas Vince** at the Dominion theatre in Tottenham Court Road, where Cinderella was on show in all her grimy glory.

On a recent TV show, Jim waxed lyrical about a moving animatronic fox which is a centrepiece of the

production. 'The children just love it' he said. That may be, but it must have been a very weary fox which Nicholas told me about toward the end of the run. Its tail had been broken – no doubt by teeny vandals – and had to be wagged with Cinderella's broom.

DREW STORIES

More stories to show that Christmas is often not the season of good will for the media . . .

E.T. was, of course, the big video hit over Christmas, and some film magazines duly trotted out 'where are they now?' pieces for **Henry Thomas**, **Peter Coyote**, **Dee Wallace**, etc.

Most omitted to mention child star **Drew Barrymore** for one very good reason, but, as always, some bright spark had to throw ash. What am I talking about? Well, 13-year-old Drew, who used to be a firm favourite in Dino De Laurentiis films, has just left a US rehab centre after a four-year battle against drink and drugs. That would make her nine when she started, and shows that fame can get to the young as well as the old.

The second Bad Press Coverage item could also go under the heading of Wicked Lies, and concerns our old friend Freddy Krueger, though this time in his guise as director **Robert Englund**. You may have noticed that our back cover ad

last issue announced the 976-*Evil* phone game. Well, didn't the complaints come flooding in to distributor **Medusa**? Actually, no, they didn't, but *The Sun* and *News of the World* drummed up a drama.

Chequebooks no doubt at the ready, they approached MPs such as Terry Lewis as well as a host of morality campaigners so that they could claim in their columns that that the phone line 'encourages children to ring up demons' and 'mimic a psychopathic teenage killer' called Hoax. The phone line was also said to mimic the film, and to be aimed at children aged 11 and over.

And what does Medusa have to say? Wrong, wrong, wrong. The game and film have little to do with each other, Hoax is the villain of the piece, and the game is only advertised in ostensibly adult publications.

What's more, none of the journalists or MPs had seen the game's script, designed by writers on *GM*, the popular role-playing magazine. I don't know who are worse, the so-called Gutter Press or the so-called Right Honourable Members of Parliament . . .

MOMMY DEAREST

Dame Edna Everage should be ashamed of herself. Her husband Norm hasn't been in the ground for half a year when I hear that she not only has a son but also an actress daughter, called Tessa.

Ed's not always so coy about her blood relations, so her silence over this lovely young thing got me to wondering what's going on. Well, the mysterious Tessa is about to appear in yet another Medusa horror film, called *Out of the Body*, about a man whose sleeping moments are used for murder by a monster.

Fine, but what's even stranger is that Tessa's surname is Humphries. What I'd like to know is, who is this man and when did his relationship with Dame Edna develop?

Talking of marital, and familial, relationships, it is my sad duty to tell readers that one of the US cinema's most most creative couples, **James Cameron** and **Gale Anne Hurd**, have separated. Both are hard at work on individual projects and the split has been described as amicable. If only the same could be said of all partings of the way.

When the lights go up
the show goes on.



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Long letter writers sought by 28 year old female (married!). Interests: Cats, music, cinema, writing, Barker, Herbert, Masterton. All welcome - any fellow Liverpudlians in exile?? Carolyn Farrell, 31 Rokeby Street, Rugby, Warwickshire. CV21 3RH

FANZINES

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A TASTE FOR TORTURE

"Iron Maiden on stage are what good horror should be"



To many people, heavy metal is personified by Iron Maiden. Their stage act and energetic music have formed the basis of a cult which can be traced back to their genesis some ten years ago.

Controversial horror writer Shaun Hutson's long-term friendship with Iron Maiden makes him an obvious choice when it comes to uncovering the secret fears of the band. But, as he soon discovered, such terrors are easier to find in their music than in their personalities or memories . . .



ransylvania.
Phantom of the
Opera. Murders in
the Rue Morgue.
Killers. Twilight
Zone. The Number of
the Beast. Children of
the Damned. The
Evil that Men Do.
Shall I go on?

The track listings sound like a rundown of horror film or book titles, but are they? Are they hell. They are, of course, songs by the world's most successful rock band, Iron Maiden.

Even the band was named after the famous torture device which boasted adjustable metal spikes which drove victims into paroxysms of physical anguish. They've been torturing all the poseurs and the ponces, the teenyboppers and the trendies for the past ten years or more with the type of music to often maligned in the press by those who can't remember what *real* music is all about.

None of your one-hit wonders here. No sanitised shit for safe airplay. Maiden are the biggest

there is – and before all the U2 and Queen fans start jumping up and down in protest I'll say it again. Maiden are the biggest rock band in the world. Bar none.

There are five reasons for this (*advert? - Ed*). Their names are Steve Harris (bass), Bruce Dickinson (vocals), Dave Murray (guitar), Adrian Smith (guitar) and Nicko McBrain (drums). Five gentlemen of impeccable musical ability and impeccable good taste. They must be, they read my books.

So, what happens? The editor of **FEAR** says 'Do a bit on Iron

Maiden. You know them. 'So, I say okay, I'm spending time with them during the last British tour, I'll ask them what scares them.

Simple.

Or maybe not.

Five nights (three at Hammersmith Odeon and two at Wembley Arena) I was with them, but not once did the subject of their fears come up. Why not? Now that is simple. I didn't ask. When you're having the time of your life you don't bother with things like that, do you?

But, before all the trendy readers put this magazine down wondering why the article (a) isn't about either Erasure or some other pop group and (b) wasn't written by one of **FEAR**'s usual hacks, try reading on and discover that fear is very much a part of Maiden's work.

OUT OF THE BODY, OUT OF THE MIND

They are quite ridiculously approachable for men so successful. 'Down to earth' could have been invented to describe them. Talk about what scares you? Sod that, Steve Harris would rather talk about West Ham's chances of winning the league. Or should that be avoiding relegation, Steve?

But if you look at some of the songs he's written over the course of seven studio albums, you can find threads which give clues to his fears.

Take *Heaven Can Wait* from the album *Somewhere in Time*. It's about a man who is undergoing an operation, leaves his body and floats to heaven. Will he die or will he return to his body and live on? Listen to the song.

Or, from the latest album *Seventh Son of a Seventh Son*, the song *Infinite Dreams*. The terror of nightmares is explored.

Other Harris compositions which spring most readily to mind in connection with the genre are *Transylvania*, *Murders in the Rue Morgue*, and *The Number of the Beast* (prefaced live by a suitably eerie spoken intro from the Book of Revelation).

Iron Maiden on stage are what good horror films and novels should be. They are powerful, amusing, occasionally breathtaking and, above all, supremely entertaining.

Good music, good horror. They go hand in hand. I should know; I'm mentioned on two of their albums and they're mentioned in at least five of my books.

Bruce Dickinson's liking for horror is best summed up by looking at his lyrics, too. From *Only the Good Die Young*:

*Is Death another birthday?
A way to kiss your dreams
goodbye? Do the undead live*

*within us and look through
our eyes?*

Moonchild and *Children of the Damned* also contain some strikingly horrific images. When *Moonchild* finishes, live, the anguished cries of a child echo across the blackened arena. It is chilling. It is superbly effective.

GRAND GUIGNOL

Dave Murray smiles too much to look as if anything scares him, but one thing did, more than most. It scared the whole band.

They were headlining the Castle Donington Monsters of Rock festival back in August. They all told me how, standing on stage, looking out on 107,000 people, they came close to 'losing their bottle'.

I can remember sitting with Dave and his wife in a caravan backstage after the Festival and he was still overawed by it. Nicko (not a man to be easily distracted, well, not unless it's by a roadie wearing a Sooty suit descending from the lighting rig onto him) also confessed to having felt more than a little jumpy while standing on his drum stool looking over the heaving masses that freezing August evening in the Midlands.

And Nicko 'dead by dawn' McBrain is a pilot, so not much should scare him. It's the other poor sods up there who have to watch out, eh, Nick?

Adrian Smith is the calm one, it appears. Between each number he takes a couple of drags on his cigarette. What scares him? Probably someone disturbing his fishing.

H, as he's called, was the one who wrote *Stranger in a Strange Land*. It was based not on the Robert Heinlein novel, but on the Antarctic expedition of 1846 which entered the news recently when the bodies of three members were uncovered, perfectly preserved. Strangely enough, *Erebus* was the name of their ship (and of one of *Shaun's* most gory little numbers - Ed).

Told you, men of impeccable taste are Maiden. They do, without doubt, belong in this magazine because they are the closest thing we have to Grand Guignol, a French-originated style of theatre which features gaudy violence, sadism, torture and a lot of blood. And they also belong at the top of the tree musically for the reason that they are, quite simply, the best.

Any old Iron? No way. The best metal.

"One thing scared Dave Murray, more than most. It scared the whole band."

FEAR

AT MIDNIGHT

● **DEAN R KOONTZ** challenges British best sellers with his mainstream mixture of fantasy, science fiction and the supernatural. We have exclusive news of his latest best seller and reveal a plan to publish several previously pseudonymous novels under his own name. Also: news of the film options on his fiction.

● **RENE HARLIN** drops in to continue our coverage of *Nightmare on Elm Street IV*. He's also been signed to direct *Aliens III*, so expect to hear his views on the movies.

● **ROBERT HOLDSTOCK** tells **FEAR**'s Kim Newman that variety is the spice of life - he's the author of fantasies *Mythago Wood* and *Lavondyss* plus several occult horror novels.

● While **ANNE MCCAFFREY** (*Dragonriders of Pern*) keeps up the tales of crystal singers, winged stallions, and dinosaurs, **FEAR** has all the info on her attempts to get the dragons into movies.

● **DAUGHTERS OF DARKNESS** - **FEAR** looks at the work of women writers such as **ANNE RICE**, **BARBARA HAMBLEY** and **LISA TUTTLE**. Can they play as dirty as their male horror counterparts?

ALSO

● Horror illustrator **DAVE CARSON** digs up some chills.

● **FICTION** from **STEPHEN GALLAGHER** and **GUY N SMITH**.

● **PLUS** The winners of our mighty *Prince of Darkness* competition **And don't forget the very latest news from the book, video and film worlds.**

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PALACE
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